TELOS

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INTRODUCTION

In keeping with our policy of expanding political discourse, the first essay, "Subterranean Individualism," combines a study of the increasing bankruptcy of Maoist social individualism with a discussion of the major problems of Chinese politics and society after Mao. Lee illustrates how the regime's attempt to force the internalization of Maoism resulted in the growth of skeptical private persons behind the masks of China's cheerful robots. Ultimately, then, the totalization of social duties under Mao concludes in rampant private individualism under Hua, which, at best, uses the "red" super-ego to win personal pay-offs and privileges from the modernizing improvements of the "experts."

Paggi's essay attempts to reconcile Gramsci's thought with the previous Leninist tradition. A leading intellectual in the Italian Communist Party, Paggi introduces many significant insights on Gramsci's notion of the party and of science. Yet, at the same time, Paggi introduces ambiguity into the Gramscian philosophy of praxis by binding it so tightly to Leninism. He sustains the Togliattian fiction that Gramsci is a mere epilogue to Lenin who simply articulates the open divisions of Lenin's political analysis and Second International theory.

In making this claim, Paggi strives both to unhook and to reconnect Gramsci in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. By cutting loose Marxism-Leninism, Paggi uses Gramsci to legitimate an independent path for the PCI. To affirm Gramsci's absolute historicism here is to support the viability of the Via Italiana *and to discredit Bukharin and Plekhanov, as Gramsci did, is to distance the PCI from the USSR. Yet, in breaking with "Soviet Marxism," Paggi energetically tries to resurrect the "considerable" Marxist ties in Gramsci and the PCI to the more respectable Lenin. Yet Paggi obscures how Gramsci's notion of Leninism is ultimately quite* Gramscian. *That is, Gramsci saw Lenin as an integral part of the Marxist tradition because he first realized Marx's philosophy as political praxis. Paggi's article, although well done, fails to remove the distortions imposed on Gramsci by the PCI. He expertly details how Gramsci recovers Marx from Engels and Kautsky; yet he does not recover Gramsci in a similar fashion from Togliatti and the PCI. While not indicative of the usual* Telos *approach to Gramsci, Paggi's essay is nonetheless an example of the best that the PCI theoreticians have to offer in the field of Gramsci studies.*

Schmidt's "Praxis and Temporality" attempts to outline Kosik's political theory. Unlike Habermas, Kosik does not wrongly confuse the distinction between labor and interaction. Rather, he clarifies their interrelation by retaining the element of temporality. Reviewing how Habermas and Kosik approach praxis, Schmidt follows Kosik in stressing how the crude reduction of praxis to production in Eastern Europe has suffocated that element of "fabrication" or conscious creative choice in the emancipatory alternatives of socialism. An early Kosik article, "The Dialectic of Morality and the Morality of the Dialectic," follows up Schmidt's analysis. Here, Kosik presents the problem of morality as the overcoming of reified praxis through the revolutionary praxis expressed in the morality of the dialectic.

French cultural life is notorious for its vulnerability to fads. True to form, the latest variety—the so-called "new philosophy"—has swept the national scene. But, as

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Castoriadis points out, it is neither all that new nor altogether true. Further, it ends up instrumentalized by the French Right, which is presently in need of a new ideology to counter the increasing popularity of Eurocommunism. A similar series of issues dealing with intellectuals place in the Marxist tradition were raised in the U.S. a couple of years ago in the article on the subject by Gouldner [Telos *26*]*—a piece immensely better argued and far more informed than anything being recycled by the French media—as well as the publication of a series of articles in* Telos *by Castoriadis, Lefort and several others. The response has been very limited, which tends to reinforce the suspicion that the success of the new philosophy in France is largely due to its potential political instrumentalization. At any rate, the annoyed responses to it by Castoriadis, Morin, Debray and Rancière try to point this out without at the same time repressing whatever emancipatory elements may lie in the new philosophy's critique of traditional communism.*

Hop Jan, a Yugoslav state planner, attempts in his "Latin Proverbs" to point out some of the problems and ironies of socialist planning. Berman's report on the International Theatre Workshop examines the pretenses of new experimental departures in that area. Bloch's sudden death did not allow us to write our own obituary: consequently we reproduce two fragments of longer pieces by Habermas and Negt as they appeared in Rinascita, *as a tribute to the last exponent of a generation now gone. Unlike Bloch, Bruno Rizzi never attained broad recognition, yet his seminal work on the USSR turned out to be far ahead of the whole Left at the time. This explains the fact that it was repressed and ignored—sometimes even plagiarized and bastardized—by subsequent generations, who have yet to figure out exactly how to deal with the USSR. Rizzi's death, therefore, should be commemorated; remembrance of him should serve as a warning against that selective Leftist amnesia that makes "bourgeois objectivist and pluralist values" look like an immense improvement. A good, almost criminal example of this Leftist amnesia is provided by the malicious distortions seen in West Coast Marxist-Leninists handling of council communism, which is here promptly corrected.*

Since the publication of the "Internal Polemics" in Telos *31, we have had considerable response from the readers, some of which the editors felt merited publication. If nothing else, these letters indicate what some readers think of the journal's general direction. This section also will include rejoinders to articles or notes in previous issues and polemics concerning some of the issues. The section in this number of* Telos *includes a heated exchange among Slater, Plaut and Jacoby, and another between Cohen and Blume.*

In the review section, Cohen discusses Heller's book on Marx's theory of need and goes on to indicate some fundamental problems with Marx's theory of class; Sherover examines Kovel's work on therapy, noting some theoretical ambiguities it raises; Heller shows that Anderson's conclusions do not necessarily follow from his premises and arguments; George takes Slater to task for theoretical pussyfooting; Howard attempts to squeeze political mileage out of Krieger's historiography; Carlo analyzes problems of socialist planning raised in Kosta's work; Watson locates flaws in Kellner's Korsch anthology; Alford rakes Winner over the coals for a superficial treatment of technology; and Hamilton attempts to draw some broader implications of Levi's work.

Tim Luke
Paul Piccone

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SUBTERRANEAN INDIVIDUALISM: CONTRADICTIONS OF POLITICIZATION

by Sarel Lee

The elevation of Hua Kuo-feng from relative obscurity to the highest position in the People's Republic of China and the "liquidation of the ultra-rightists" from the political scene occurred without a ripple of resistance among the population at large.[1] To conclude that any form of resistance would have been impossible in any case since the "moderates" had the support of the army overlooks the apparently genuine satisfaction with which common people viewed the purge.[2] For them, recent events marked the beginning of a long-awaited respite from continual political turmoil, from ideological purity and from the ever-present possibility of "criticism, self-criticism" campaigns oriented toward further sacrifices.

It is well known that in China the Party attempts to reach every aspect of public and personal life, from productive relations to interpersonal relations; from outward behavior to inner motives; from residence to child-rearing, sex habits,[3] clothing and marriage. In the city, the population is administered by residents' committees, which act as a bridge between the people and the government. Ideally, they are charged with conveying the opinions of the masses to the higher levels and relaying the policies and laws of the Party and government to the residents. In fact, they supervise the daily activity of the residents, who regard the committees as their immediate superiors. According to one refugee's report: "Their public activities are: distributing food, oil and other coupons to residents; inspecting the cleanliness of the surroundings; mobilizing youths for going down to the countryside... However, their main activity is secretly supervising the activities of every household—the so-called 'guard against the sabotage activities of the class enemies.' The residents' committees have complete information on all

1. Whatever violent outbursts have occurred in the pockets of a few provinces can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, according to newspaper reportage, it seems that some of the violence actually dates back to the Cultural Revolution but is being disclosed now in order to justify treating the "radicals" harshly. Second, it could be the manifestation of a segment of a frustrated population willing to take advantage of a momentary weakness in the Party's hegemony. However, both Shanghai—the seat of radical power—and Peking—the strong house of leftism—are quiet.

2. Cf. Mark Bayn, "Chinese got drunk when Mrs. Mao fell," *Toronto Star*, November 27, 1976. According to Gayn, "So widespread was the jubilation that the stores sold half of their stocks of liquor to the celebrants."

3. *Hygiene During Puberty* (Peking, 1975), untranslated. This is a general book on health care (available to anyone in China) with a curious section on the evils of masturbation, which allegedly dispels energy from revolutionary activity. Sleeping with a thin blanket, jogging, and reading more Marx, Lenin and Mao are recommended to counter the urge.

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residents under their control—their class backgrounds, positions, the number of family members, social relations (who is a 'five-black element,' who has relatives in Taiwan, who has committed political mistakes, who has committed any crimes)—the residents' committees know it all."[4] Since applications for employment, housing, permits to leave the country or to marry must first have the committee's approval, no one dare offend it. As one interviewed refugee said, "One's life is hell if the Committee has a bad impression of you."[5] Each residents' committee consists of a chairman who must be a Party member, four or five vice-chairmen of "good background," and several activists. The residents' committees are under the leadership of various local police station branches, which in turn are accountable to the district public security bureaus and all the way up to the municipal and the provincial public security bureaus.

The residents' committees represent only a small part of an endeavor to encapsulate the individual in a *hsiao-tsu*—small groups of 8 to 15 members—that institutionalize thought reform.[6] In some cases, especially since the late 1950s, the *hsiao-tsu* was identical with the lowest administrative subdivision of a particular organization, such as a work group in a factory or an office section. In other cases, it was organized where no formal groups would normally exist, such as in urban neighborhoods or school classrooms. In all cases, they were formed and supervised by higher authorities rather than emerging spontaneously. The *hsiao-tsu* acts as the communication organ through which its members learn everything from the new ideas and goals set by the leaders to agricultural techniques to birth control. It also functions as the mechanism for social control, mediating any interpersonal hostilities, detecting and punishing various types of deviant behavior, which can range from poor work, laziness, disputes with fellow workers to 'constant complaining'—the substance of mutual criticism. Most importantly, the *hsiao-tsu* is an integral part of the thought reform effort which, it is claimed, involves more than developing loyalty to the leaders in an attempt to change a wide spectrum of attitudes, habits, inclinations and desires in order to produce "new men," individuals willing to devote themselves to broad organizational and national goals without concern for individual advancement or comfort. In study, group members are expected to engage in regular mutual criticism: thoughts and actions are analyzed and compared critically with the standards set in the assigned study materials. Each member is expected to criticize his own shortcomings, to accept the criticism of the rest of the group and, in turn, to point out the failings of others. Such an insti-

4. These reports are taken from an unpublished manuscript by B.M. Frolic, Department of Political Science, York University. This manuscript contains over 1000 pages of interviews with about 60 Chinese refugees who left the People's Republic either legally or illegally between 1971 and 1973. The interviews were conducted mainly in Hong Kong.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

6. The following discussion on *hsiao-tsu* is based on information given in Martin K. Whyte, *Small Groups and Political Rituals in China* (Berkeley, 1974).

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tutionalized mode of thought reform communicates to the individual that he will have difficulty expressing or finding support for opposition, or even for avoiding compliance: the political body appears homogeneous.

The standard of a model citizen by which one is to criticize present behavior is given to both children and adults alike. The model child as projected by grade-school readers would be one totally dedicated to and willing to sacrifice everything in the service of the collective.[7] The same virtues of self-sacrifice permeate such super-heroes as Lei Feng and Wang Chieh, whose diaries are studied and restudied as a sample of exemplary behavior. The ideal Maoist man is militant, technically creative, politically self-directing, conditioned to act as Mao Tse-tung would act if he could be everywhere at the same time. The good society is inhabited by people who abnegate private interests for the public good, are constantly inspired by a strong sense of social responsibility, motivated by a singularity of purpose, with an implacable hostility to the forces of evil, however defined.

"Serve the people" is more than an empty slogan: behind it stand political and social forces that annihilate individuality—not in order to raise the truths of individuality to a higher level of generality, but to empty individuality of all substance, replacing it with an abstracted ego permeated with a preconceived universality. Maoism claims a structure of thought which, on the basis of its assumptions, is capable of formulating the correct way of relating to the world. It is imposed as a rational discourse closed in itself. It is a call to a particular mode of being on behalf of a transcendent purpose. Indeed, the Party's leadership was convinced of the correctness of its policies. Its phenomenal attainment of power from the low ebb following near destruction in Southern China, the Long March and expansion in face of powerful Japanese invaders were feats that the Party associated with its ideological commitment. The truth of Maoism is that its truth has been proven. This much is well known.

What is less known are the modes in which the individual has carved out a private space in which his interests are preserved if not overtly articulated or fulfilled, and by which he differentiates himself from others, specifically, from the overarching Other of the Party and its Chairman.[8] Private space in China refers, at best, to the individual's secret inner world, a hidden layer that is not intersubjectively shared, that is not unconscious, yet is neither quite admitted nor quite repressed. This is all the more so because the penetration of a uniform ideology was paralleled by the reorganization of all aspects of culture—art, literature, cinema, opera—forms of culture that at

7. C. Ridley, P. Godwin, D. Doolin, *The Making of a Model Citizen in Communist China* (Stanford, 1971).

8. Of course, Mao cannot be equated with the Party. The history of China since the Yenan period has shown that Mao often disagreed with other Party members as to the strategy and tactics of building socialism (e.g., the Great Leap Forward, Hundred Flowers campaign). However, the differing factions are irrelevant in this context since all share a holistic view of society.

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least allowed the possibility for the institutional mediation from individual to social protest. Under Chiang Ch'ing, leisure was politicized: socialist realism was brought to a pinnacle. The revolutionary themes expounded in music, plays, newspapers, broadcasts and so on, were unified, pervasive, and constantly the same. Whether or not the family concretizes private space in a positive moment of resistance against and refuge from the ongoing levelling of society (at the same time as it complies) remains an open question. Here, private space refers to the defensive individual—a defensive subjectivity which, instead of acting positively in a self-affirming way, according to actions mediated by a self-conscious reason, acts negatively to preserve whatever space is possible within the context of an official prescription that admits no deviation: the individual is constituted underground.

The emerging profile is that of individuals whose sense of self is nurtured in face of a society that collapses all spheres of living activity into a common allegiance to Mao's Thoughts. Yet, individuals are able to distance their particularistic needs from social needs in everyday life.[9] Whereas the latter are seen as justified and good for the task of nation-building (this much is consistent with official ideology), the former are seen as personally justifiable but having no validity beyond the individual. In speaking about the "back-to-the-countryside" campaign, refugees uniformly agreed that it was an essential part of alleviating such urban problems as housing shortages, unemployment, food shortages in the cities, etc., although they also agreed that the policy was bad insofar as individuals were concerned, since they played no role in deciding whether or not they were to be sent, where they were to go, or how long they would stay there: "Who would continue studying further and who would go down to the countryside had already been internally decided long beforehand. Actions such as voluntarily enlisting for the countryside or voicing one's determination were superfluous and a false façade. Those who had left a good impression on the class supervisor; those who were student cadres; and those of good class background were the ones who had the chance to continue their study."[10] Rustication was "voluntary" in the sense that physical force was apparently not used. But recalcitrants were harangued at public meetings, along with their parents, and youths faced losing their ration privileges if they persisted in refusing to move to the communes. Despite this, according to another refugee, approximately 30 to 40 per cent of the people sent down to the countryside eventually found their way back to the city either by legal or illegal means.

Particularistic needs may be thought but not expressed, deviously fulfilled

9. For people like Hinton, Macciocchi, Wheelwright and McFarlane, the psychic embeddedness in the dominant ideology demonstrates a transcendence to a euphoric identity of universal interests which negate yet preserve particularistic interests. Cf. William Hinton, *Turning Point in China* (New York, 1972); M.A. Macciocchi, *Daily Life in Revolutionary China* (New York, 1972); and E.L. Wheelwright and B. McFarlane, *The Chinese Road to Socialism* (New York, 1970).

10. Frolic, *op. cit.*, p. 950.

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or held in abeyance. At any rate, their fulfillment is not even promised by the slogans of the day. The divergence between individual needs and social good is turned inward; however, tensions are neither dispelled when material conditions progressively improve nor wholly sublimated and internalized as guilt. Rather, they are imperfectly resolved: the resolution surfaces as cunning and ruse in individuals who see self-preservation as the only viable form of rationality. This is a form of reason whereby the individuals' consciousness of where their advantages lie induces them to adapt and become subordinate to society whenever they are not powerful enough to pattern society on their own interests. Whereas reason in humanism is guided by the ideal of harmony between individual interests and the common good, the ideological projection of a false universality means that the individual has to do violence to himself and learn that the life of the whole, as defined by the Party, is the necessary precondition of his own.

At the level of everyday life, this self-preserving rationality expresses itself in a clever and manipulative ego, at times revealing itself in an overt and blatant manner in various ingenious and elaborate techniques of working within the system. Peasants can hide their grain by reporting production figures lower than the actual figure. "Using the back door"—i.e., using personal connections or bribing officials to achieve employment, scarce commodities, a transfer from the country to the city—is regarded as "smart" and not disgraceful: "If you have a friend who is a doctor, he can give you a sick leave certificate for one week."[11] In fact, the practice was so widespread among government organs, departments, the army, and down to the local commercial departments that a campaign was finally launched to eradicate the "back door," although one refugee was skeptical of even the harshest measures' effectiveness: "The reason is that almost everyone, from the first Party Secretary, the chairman of the revolutionary committee down to local cadres are using the back door, and to combat this means that they will have to combat themselves. Therefore, although the Central level issued an order to combat using the back door, the regions have adopted the attitude of 'shirk the difficult and take it easy'—and sometimes simply total ignorance. As a result, the practice of using the back door is still flourishing throughout the country."[12] Whatever disgust there was centered around the hierarchically structured access to the back door. For example, children of Party officials have managed to return to the city permanently through their special connections. "The youths remaining in the countryside are children of people who have no political mainstay and come from weak economic conditions. Their fate probably will be to remain in the countryside for the rest of their lives. Toward such tendencies ordinary people dare not express their anger openly because they are afraid that once they say the wrong words, they will be branded for 'opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat,'

11. *Ibid.*, p. 415.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 435.

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for undermining the *shang-shan hsia-hsiang* policy or even regarded as an 'active counterrevolutionary' to be arrested."[13]

Pockets of privacy did develop among individuals who were able to find some persons with whom they could confide or connive, persons whose sympathy and support helped to break the unanimity of organized social pressure. More often, however, the manipulative ego is hidden under a layer of falsely projected, politically correct motives. This led individuals to avoid some situations that would throw them in too close contact with others, thereby increasing the likelihood of inadvertently disclosing their negative thoughts or, to avoid such situations altogether, in an effort to avoid the misery of criticism and of being labelled as "backward." The Chinese are wary of the increasing tendency of officials to classify them in accordance with a political conduct that supposedly manifests their ideas rather than in the more orthodox way of linking a position in the social system to a system of thought.[14]

Thus, people usually prefer to live at home instead of in factory dormitories despite considerable economic savings, because dormitory life is too 'complicated': "People know almost everything you do all the time, and when a political campaign comes, anything can be used against you."[15] Thus, "the best way to deal with people and to live is not to get involved with them or to tell them too many things. Otherwise, they can eventually tell on you and reveal things about you when a campaign comes along. You just have leisurely chats, talking about nothing important."[16] This was especially true with Party members: "A Party member is respected by others. However, this respect is mingled with fear—a Party member is, after all, not an ordinary person. He is a member of the leading stratum in China and a symbol of dictatorship and rule. With such a person one could not speak out freely. Aside from talking progressively, it is dangerous to talk critically about other matters."[17] Political participation is at variance with the image of a civic culture that is supposed to be developing: participation is regarded as advantageous for one's "curriculum vitae" or as a mechanism for self-protection: "When a youth applied to join the Youth League, aside from feeling 'mighty,' there were other ambitions. When he was still at senior middle school, he already knew that after joining the League, one received several privileges, i.e., members received priority in entering university and were given the best jobs. Therefore, he did the utmost to show himself as being 'progressive'."[18]

13. *Ibid.*, p. 432. Another example is the back door of the army. Commodities which have long vanished from the market are still sold in shops reserved exclusively for army personnel: milk powder, glucose, superior quality cigarettes, spirits, all kinds of piece goods, wristwatches and bicycles.

14. According to Simon Leys, party privileges reveal the persistence of class division: the most obvious forms of class division have been masked without changing their substance. Cf. "Chinese Shadows," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XXIV, No. 10, 1977, pp. 17-28.

15. Frolic, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 455.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 454.

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Likewise, the motives of adults trying to join the Party are largely based on the anticipated "special privileges" that Party members and their children enjoy. Others who do not have the qualifications for joining the Party nevertheless depend on their active performance to stay in favor with the leadership, to secure their own livelihood and to avoid being attacked by others as "backward." The mode of response is similar to cadres sent down to the country who, despite their personal objection to the campaign, wrote "determination letters" to the organ's leadership expressing their willingness to "use this rare opportunity of being able to go down to remold their minds." Since they had no choice but to go down, why not pretend to be advanced so that they still had a chance of coming back to the city in the future?

The situation is more problematic when the standards for correct behavior remain unclear. Thus, for example, students now do not learn history because the old history textbooks were compiled by 'black gang' elements and therefore are contrary to Mao Tse-tung's ideas. But nobody dares to compile new history textbooks and therefore this course has simply been abolished. As for the sciences, because those charged with compiling those textbooks were afraid of being accused of restoring bourgeois education, they tried their best not to include even scientific laws invented by foreigners and their research results. They went so far as to delete the names of foreign inventors: "Thus 'Mendeleev's periodic system of the elements' is revised into 'the periodic system of elements'; 'Newton's universal gravitation' is revised to 'universal gravitation.' This often led to strange gaps (paragraphs would not follow logically) and caused persons not to know whether to laugh or cry."[19]

Contrary to the image of the Chinese as cheerful robots (the historical confluence of subject and object), or as pathetic automatons (solely the embodiment of the Party as otherness which assumes a personal closure mirroring a closed ideological system), individuals express a private grudging if not a skeptical acceptance of the given as absolute truth and Maoism as the absolute *telos*. Their inner life discloses that they do not confuse the reality of everyday life—the thoroughly particular—with the Lei Fengs and the Wang Chiehs. The positive dimension of private space also discloses its negative side. Rationality as self-preservation entails defensive moves to withstand being carved into one pattern, salvaging whatever subjectivity in face of false universality. The self survives as the seat of an unexpressed distance that allows for the possibility of resistance if not sabotage. An inward retreat for a rearrangement of the conceptual world is not a conservative force if the time is not ripe for the rearrangement of reality. On the other hand, this type of self-preservation risks becoming a dogmatic end. Cunning as a mode of survival adapts the given to one's own purposes but carries no goals for transcending that given. The secret rejection of Maoism risks the rejection of any universally binding ideal.

The struggling individual's confusion is the same as that of the agents who presume to decide the good of all. The "three constantly read articles," Mao's

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 444, 476.

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"Serve the People," "In Memory of Norman Bethune," and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountain," reiterate the daily slogans of confidence in the people's ability to undertake enormous tasks and glorification of the ideal of working selflessly, persistently and if necessary, dying for the common good. The content of the "little red book," like the parables, slogans and substance of mutual criticism sessions, are all attempts to eradicate a selfish, bourgeois, individualistic, competitive morality and to substitute for it a collective, selfless attitude. Clearly the one is juxtaposed against the other with a view to developing one in a process that would eradicate the other. Particularity is seen as entirely negative without conceding a distinction between egoistic selfish needs and the "authentic" human need for individual self-expression and assertion.

In China, the notion of individuality is legitimate only insofar as it develops communal interests.[20] Individual self-development is permitted only as social self-development because each is seen as the realization of the other and the attempt to divide one's living context from oneself is seen as dividing one's realization from oneself. This would be fine if individuals were encouraged to feel, think and speak for themselves and "to experience their potency through collective acitivity in which they aid others and learn from others what their needs and interests are."[21] Unfortunately, decisions as to what constitutes communal interests are not part of ongoing discussion at the lower Party and non-Party reaches of society. The Maoist interpretation of the dialectical process as "unity, struggle, unity" presupposes a concrete vision of the alternate society, of relations between individuals and their needs. In fact, the *raison d'être* of such campaigns as the "Cultural Revolution" is to drive out old values in order to construct a new morality consonant with a new collectivist society as defined by the Party. For Mao, unity was reserved for "the people"—for those who accepted Party leadership and socialism. And unity was to precede the struggle: "In criticizing Left dogmatisms, we discard this old method [of ruthless struggle and merciless blows] and adopted a new one, that is, one starting from the desire for unity, distinguishing between right and wrong through criticism or struggle and arriving at a new unity on a new basis... The essential thing is to start from the desire for unity. For without this desire, the struggle is certain to get out of hand. Wouldn't this be the same as 'ruthless struggle and merciless blows?' And what Party unity would there be left? It was this very experience that led us to the formula: unity, criticism, unity."[22] Political discussions are reduced to interpreting what a Party dictum actually means and the implications it has on one's everyday life. If one can characterize the Chinese citizen as being particularly

20. For example, in the idea of self-reliance and self-autonomy, these concepts are used more in the sense of national and regional, economic and technical self-sufficiency than in the sense of self-development. There is another way in which the notion of individuality is legitimately used, that is, as a more efficient means to implement uniformity.

21. Michael Kosok, review of *The Chinese Road to Socialism*, *Telos*, 9 (Fall 1971), p. 136.

22. Mao Tse-tung, "On the Correct Handling of contradictions among the People" in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking, 1965), p. 356.

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politically informed, it is because political vicissitudes have an effect on how is is to behave.

The individual can thrive only submerged in that large moral entity, "the people," which is the source of all sovereignty and virtue. But behind the reified concept of "the people" stands the Party which, according to the official version, functions almost as a computer terminal to co-ordinate the multifaceted partial truths of each into a unified whole: this is the meaning of "from the masses to the masses" that simulates a transparency of institutions and a reciprocity of decisions: "At each level of discussion the opinions of the masses are collected and referred back to higher levels. It is a very thorough way of communication. It is this communication process that makes China such an organized and disciplined country. If you are not convinced that the instruction is right, then they send people to explain it to you or to criticize you until you conform or realize that the instruction is good. This is a very time-consuming process and meetings take place all the time. The Party doesn't care about the time involved or the money spent but they emphasize the effect. It is extremely important for the Party that this system works and that people who might not be in agreement with the system can be singled out for education, persuasion and re-education, if necessary."[23]

For the Party, the partial rationality of each member is translated into a rational whole in the plan for a socialist society. Far from thinking that it was brutally imposing its solution on an amorphous if not unwilling mass, it believed that it was expressing in socialist terms what the masses wanted in a confused way. In a 1965 interview with André Malraux, Mao recalled: "You know I've proclaimed for a long time, we must teach the masses clearly what we have received from them confusedly." [24] To an extent, he was right. Few of the refugees interviewed challenged the economic and political policies of China. And yet, an element of irrationality remained in the rational whole: the very principle of sacrifice as a virtue as embodied in China's road to socialism implies the negation of the individual as the means to some holistic future end, an abnegation that is covertly rejected in the secret articulation of the individual's own needs. Like the Party, the individual sees all satisfaction attached to the indivdiual, whether derived from hoarding grain or reading "forbidden" books, as egoistic; unlike the Party, the individual's willingness to give egoism its circuitous expression at least keeps alive the objective possibility for the idea of self-development and self-assertion, despite its present subjective confusion with egoistic, selfish interests.

It may be objected that refugees represent a selective sample of the population who, by their very escape, discredit the generalizability of their accounts. They represent the marginal edges of the mobilization campaigns, i.e., those "bad elements" who have resisted re-education and persist in selfish behavior because they have not identified their own interests with those of the community. But resistance has also the value of a judgment and does not

23. Frolic, *op.cit.*, p. 248.

24. *Anti-Memoirs* (New York, 1968), p. 362.

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merely reveal the remains of a petty bourgeois or Confucian past destined to disappear as the new society develops. The extent to which the "secret" individual is a widespread phenomenon cannot yet be definitely ascertained. In any case, most published analyses do not even leave room for such developments, let alone account for them in any satisfactory way. This is not to say that traditional values resist eradication or that the capitalist ethos is natural and immutable, or even that self-interest (as opposed to selfishness) when harnessed to social ends cannot itself be transformed. Rather, the tensions of the individual's felt conflict between his needs and those of the community, between his self and the socially proscribed whole cannot be ignored in an adulation of Chinese socialism or by dismissing them as legacies of Confucianism.

For Hinton, Macciocchi, Wheelwright and McFarlane—to name only a few —China is well on its way to socialism. With the Soviet disaster in mind, they agree that what distinguishes the Chinese road to socialism is that its goal involves vast changes in human nature, in the way persons relate to one another, to their work and to society. The struggle to change material conditions requires the struggle to change humans, just as the struggle to change humans depends on the ability to change the conditions under which they work and live. "Its revolution is transforming the revolutionary himself."[25]

In contrast to the Soviet model, China is seen as a challenge to the orthodox view that the historical jump from pre-socialist to socialist forms comes about only by an increase of social wealth as a result of the development of the productive forces. Under Maoist thought, public ownership was considered only a technical and insufficient condition for solving the problem of Chinese socialism. Not material abundance alone, but changes in human relations were being built into the earlier transition period as a precondition for a later communist stage. This entailed the active economic participation of the mass of peasants and workers in a politically conscious way: the former was contained in the latter just as the latter implied the former. It is within this framework that the Cultural Revolution gains its significance.[26]

The Cultural Revolution was correctly seen as more than an internal power struggle during which Mao's opponents were purged from leadership positions in the Party. It was a critical moment in China's much broader historical process in which the Maoist model for economic and social development, i.e., an economic strategy consistent with a mass-line politics, was consolidated and the final remnants of Soviet hegemony were cast aside. According to Hinton, Wheelwright and Macciocchi, the Cultural Revolution promised an unadulterated future implementation of a Maoist strategy that contained the concrete mediations to reverse the various forms of alienation

25. Kosok, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

26. The Cultural Revolution is given here as an example of the most extensive and intensive politicization attempt. In form, content and consequences on individual perceptions, it was not qualitatively different from numerous other mobilization campaigns.

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by attacking the mechanisms that perpetuate them and, in the same process, bring the masses to the point where they can direct themselves.

Very briefly, mass-line Leninism was still Leninism involving a vanguard party and democratic centralism. But because of the problem specific to the Chinese situation (a large peasantry, the Party's history especially during the period of the civil war when the choice was to win support of the peasantry or be annihilated), the Party was obliged to promote a vastly greater degree of responsiveness to the masses than had existed elsewhere in the Third International: it could not afford a chasm between itself and the peasants.[27] Centralism remained the rule, but there was a much greater degree of constant communication between the Party and the masses. Later economic policies attacking the division of labor, the separation of manual and mental tasks, the unequal development between town and country, were seen as consistent with this political line. The Chinese treatment of the problem of scarcity is an example of an economic policy that follows the logic of mass-line politics.[28]

More significantly, the Party claims also to be bringing the masses to the point where they will be able to take fuller charge of their own lives, through "education in self-determination." This is a revolution at the level of consciousness in which the masses can lead without being led because of their recognition of what constitutes "true social needs." Cultural change was to be the counterpart of the Party's efforts to make reified relations dance to their own tune. As Braverman has argued, in the West the minute division of labor and the regulation of set tasks sought primarily to control production rather than to increase efficiency and lower costs. Self-management is only possible when working experiences are translated into an awareness of the dynamics of the whole, in a context where production is organized in such a way that the workers can fully grasp the nature of the process and autonomously run it.[29] The Chinese Communist Party has gone far in promoting the material conditions toward such ends.

The reorganization of the economy to emphasize local autonomy, initiative and control endows a sense of purpose to the specific tasks of workers and peasants. Furthermore, the constant, deliberate and often contrived ways in which citizens link Mao's thoughts to every economic endeavor demonstrate the Party's attempts to imbue a socialist purpose to every undertaking. The individual is made to understand the relation between his task, his factory and the over-all economy and the relation between his task and the development of a socialist society.[30]

Culture was to be more than the counterpart to changing material

27. For further discussion on this point, cf. George Ross, review of books on the Cultural Revolution by Daubier, Esmein, Hsia, Karol and Schram, *Telos*, 20 (Summer 1974), pp. 138-153.

28. For further discussion, see Kosok, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-143.

29. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974).

30. *Daily Life in Revolutionary China* is full of examples of hydraulic presses and bridges credited to Mao's thought.

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conditions: it was seen as the leading edge, the vanguard in Mao's notion of the will and of the infinite malleability of man. Accordingly, the individual's conscious activity can bring about unlimited cultural changes in society at large, an internal transformation of old ideas, habits and customs. Voluntarist strains are reflected in such concepts as "man over weapons" and "politics in command." The encouragement of peasants and workers to participate in the sphere of economic decision-making had a political parallel in the anti-bureaucratic dimension of the Cultural Revolution. As in the economic sphere, the Maoist leadership raised "redness" over the "expertness" of its own Party and state bureaucracy: the mass of rank and file were exhorted to criticize and reform "those in positions of authority taking the capitalist road." At the same time, it was a program to bring the population actively into the process of changing itself. Obviously, Maoism had recognized the importance of the management of consciousness as an essential element of the productive force.

While the extent to which the changes in social relations are long-term and can be translated into qualitative differences in the individual's everyday life has been discussed,[31] the focus is misplaced. The other crucial moment of the Cultural Revolution is generally overlooked: the Cultural Revolution was at once anti-bureaucratic and authoritarian. The other side of "the mass taking political action into their own hands" was its self-transformation to support the Party with enthusiasm. The Cultural Revolution sought to embed the thoughts of Mao directly into the consciousness of the citizens by removing the mediation of the Party, effacing the difference between the individual and society, the particular and the general, the private and the public, civil society and the state. Instead of a consciousness actively cultivated by a distinct elite group, a "revolutionary consciousness" was to grow in an environment of struggle against the old. The criticism of Party authorities was to be accompanied by a self-criticism in which individuals were asked to look deeply into the motivation of all their actions, however trivial, and evaluate them in light of the set of values proposed by Mao. The cultural struggle was to be reproduced at the individual level: internalizing the class struggle also meant internalizing the criteria by which the struggle was to be carried out.

Mass mobilization was thus accompanied by a prespecified political purpose that dictated the direction of mobilization. This was evident in that throughout the Cultural Revolution, there was an increasing tendency to develop the cult of Mao's personality. Mao emerged as the collective symbolic form. In the press he came regularly to be described as the greatest genius today, the Great Leader, Supreme Commander, the Great Helmsman and so on. The little red book of quotations came to be increasingly used as the focal point amid social disorder. Ideological unity served as the basis for group solidarity, providing the people with the standards of behavior by which they could criticize those leaders who "deviated" in their use of authority. Yet, the

31. Andrew Watson, "The Family, Interpersonal Relations and Daily Life," in Stuart Schram, ed. *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 316.

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method of controlled conflict made clear that the intention was neither to destroy the Party or the authority it commanded. The willingness of lower levels to criticize and argue against the higher levels has been balanced by the reaffirmation that orders nevertheless have to be obeyed. The "back to the countryside" campaign among students and Red Guards had as its rationale the cooling down of anti-authority fervor, which was even more volatile since there was widespread urban unemployment, as well as the convenient desire to bridge the gap between the city and the country, manual and mental labor. Also significant is the organization of workers to enter and reinstate authority within the schools, and the three-in-one revolutionary alliances which, including representatives from the Party and the army, signified the presence of a very real normative force.

In this respect, the dynamics of the Cultural Revolution were consistent with the principle of mass-line Leninism: in contrast to liberalism that allows division in unity—or rather is only a unity by virtue of an aggregate of differences—democratic centralism meant that there was only one working class and only one way of understanding things, and that the Party as the vanguard had a clearer and more correct understanding than did ordinary people.[32] The Party's function was to assist the self-education of the masses toward the totality of mass responses. Unity was reserved for those who accepted the Party leadership as the beginning and end point of the struggle to resolve contradictions. The term contradiction is extremely vague in Chinese Marxism. It can refer to mutually incompatible matters such as beliefs, desires or needs, the resolution of which involves the conquest of one by the other. It can also refer to a tension between two positions, a situation resolved by an alteration in one or both poles. In any case, the contradictions can only be satisfactorily resolved according to the Party line. Given the opportunity to express themselves and to confront the sources of their social discontent, the masses were to eventually acknowledge this line.

The Cultural Revolution however, did not bear this out. The extreme factionalism among the Red Guard—each sect claiming to hold the correct line[33]—the division between workers who wanted to seize control of their factories from managers and students who presumed to organize them, the distinction between political upheaval for continued revolution and revolutionary upheaval as opening the possibility for expressing personal desires and grievances and choosing one's own course of action demonstrated that mobilization did not have the same unified implication for the population at large. The emergence of something other than what was prescribed was always possible.

As the authority of Party cadres crumbled under criticism, people began to explore life without the constraints of the Party and of bureaucratic structure.

32. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

33. Neale Hunter, *Shanghai Journal: An Eye Witness Account of the Cultural Revolution* (New York, 1969), p. 219. Hunter found no less than 57 separate Red Guard headquarters at Shanghai in Januray 1967.

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According to Esmein, "the feeling that all sorts of new things were possible because everyone was expressing his ideas plunged the people into a kind of intoxication."[34] A good number of the demands for the removal of rules and regulations and freedom from bureaucratic control were more self-centered than constructive in intent. Youths began to show their independence in small ways—many took up smoking and enough married to make an impact on the rate of population growth. According to Chou En-lai, the population "shot up again during the Cultural Revolution when millions of Red Guards went on 'long marches' and the sexes freely intermingled."[35] The freedom to travel in order to proselytize the Cultural Revolution and to make 'revolutionary liaisons' with other Red Guard groups was used as an excuse to visit famous historic and scenic spots. Dai Hsiao-ai in *Red Guard* called this "non-revolutionary tourism."[36] Youths sent to the countryside and the frontiers for permanent settlement streamed back into the cities and demanded to reside in their city of origin. Other youths presented themselves as political dropouts, explorers of the self, putting self-interest above all else. They went by the evocative name of "wanderers."[37]

Wall posters in Peking reported that "counter-revolutionary performances were presented in Tientsin, Shanghai and Peking in clandestine theaters set up in caves on the initiative of lawless Red Guards."[38] Among workers, the debate usually centered around such immediate issues as material incentives, management methods and the role of trade unions. Non-unionized workers demanded a share of the material benefits enjoyed by unionized workers. Apprentice workers asked for a shorter peiod of training and higher pay. Veterans demanded better treatment. And peasants refused to submit grain to the state, insisting on a lower quota of state requisition.[39] Once the attack on management methods, which made possible the anomalies and abuses of authority at every social level, was launched, it accelerated into an attack on authority itself. The base did not limit itself to examining the quality of the cadres in order to sort out the "good and satisfactory" from the "bad and execrable." Under Mao's "To rebel is justified," it was no longer a question of replacing managers and Party secretaries or principals by better candidates: their functions a such were discredited.

34. Jean Esmein, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution* (New York, 1973), p. 195.
35. Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution* (New York, 1971), p. 45.
36. G. Bennett and R. Montaperto, *Red Guard: The Political Biography of Dai Hsiao-ai* (Garden City, New York, 1972), p. 107.
37. According to *Wen Hui Pao*, July 10, 1967, Shanghai: "In the course of the great Cultural Revolution a number of people have emerged who do not pay attention to state affairs and who stay out of the revolutionary movement. These people are called wanderers. They take an attitude of non-intervention in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Instead of fighting on the battlefront, they wander about school campuses, parks and streets; they spend their time in swimming pools and playing chess and cards... Whenever they are required to reveal an attitude, they just issue vague statements. They have withdrawn from the political stage." Cited in Lifton, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.
38. Alan Liu, *Political Culture and Group Conflict in Communist China* (San Francisco, 1976), p. 185.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

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Strangely enough, the Cultural Revolution had already experienced an historical presage on a much less extensive scale in the Hundred Flowers period during the spring of 1957. At that time, Mao sought to establish a critical dialogue between Party and intellectuals in order to check conservatism and abuses of power, while also criticizing anti-socialist attitudes held by people both inside and outside the Party. Again, it was undertaken with the same conviction that since the Party had attained power, its methods were correct. According to Mao: "Marxism is scientific truth and fears no criticism. If it did, if it could be overthrown by criticism it would be worthless... Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken but strengthen the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field."[40] What was meant by scientific truth was that final and absolutely certain knowledge had been attained.

Many writers and intellectuals who had risked their lives under the Kuomintang by writing revolutionary literature now hoped to serve the revolution by exposing its inadequacies or mistakes or injustices to the public. The interlude of relaxed Party control over political debates revealed the persistence of a critical tendency. Their critical realism contradicted the insistence on "revolutionary optimism."[41] In an attack that exceeded pre-specified boundaries, many intellectuals and students challenged the Party's basic monopoly of decision-making power and the appropriateness of some of the Party's most fundamental policies. The Party leaders characterized these events as betrayals on the part of "unreliable allies" and disloyal hands. In response to the criticism unleashed, which the Party decided was becoming too negative, too fundamental and destructive, an "anti-rightist" campaign was launched that was designed to stem the flood of criticism.

It would be simplistic to interpret the Cultural Revolution as a mobilization that was stopped short at a crucial moment when the Party's power was threatened and genuine chaos was imminent. For the Maoist leadership, each step toward mobilization was a step toward the internalization of its tenets. But for the masses, each step toward mobilization provided freedom to cultivate personal interests and desires. Each attempt to creating an identity with the official social ego was wrought with such ambiguities or such absurdly overwhelming demands that the process engendered a distance between people and the official social ego, as well as a need to eclipse this distance in public behavior.

Thus, slogans as a form of behavior-manipulation appear to have an even more insidious effect than the advertising of culture commodities in the

40. Mao Tse-tung, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

41. J. Berninghausen and Ted Huters, "Introductory Essay," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars: Special Issue on the Development of Revolutionary Literature*, January-March, 1976, p. 10.

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West. Unlike advertising which demands full attention, denying any mental space for an interpretive appropriation, slogans in the People's Republic demand the active appropriation of their contents within a circumscribed interpretive space: passive reception is not enough. Slogans were to become the new motor of history. They were intended to organize thoughts in a way similar to the manner in which the Party organized "volunteers" to participate in demonstrations.[42] The Party had previously sought to endow a sense of purpose to people's everyday activities by encouraging them to link their actions to the thought of Mao and hence to the overall goal of socialism. Appropriation is thereby achieved in a much more self-conscious way filling otherwise disembodied words with real content. Words have been deprived of all idealist embellishments and given concrete meaning. But this self-consciousness presents a double edge. The Maoist leadership considered it part of a process to abolish the space between Mao and the masses such that each lived in the other and spoke through the other. The revolutionary language of slogans obliges everyone to formulate ideas in the context of the primacy of politics which, when joined with action, was regarded as the unity of theory and practice. Politicized speech mirrored the subordination of all matters in social life under the political: the distinction between the political and the non-political was erased. As Whyte noted, nobody was hypocritical in using lofty words about "class struggle" or "serving the people" to characterize and justify ordinary daily activities, because this language had become the accepted form of discourse.[43] Indeed, it was the only acceptable discourse.

Yet, the compulsion to shackle behavior in slogans leads to attributing slogans to all activities in a mechanical and contrived way, to presenting one's behavior as approximating the ideal, despite the fact that there is more to one's actions than can be expressed in slogans. Students got up early to clean their dormitory rooms or to mend a classmate's clothing and then wrote about how Mao's thoughts had inspired their deeds. In a climate where political honors meant getting ahead, they "racked their brains for novel good deeds to perform as a way of putting Mao's ideas into practice and an innovation by one student led to many imitations." Even acts of kindness performed unselfconsciously were later, when recognized as such, accredited to Mao.[44] The verbal fetters on behavior undermined the sense of being included in important affairs and the feeling of having some control or influence over significant events—the very purpose of slogans. The little red book solicited personal responsibility at the same time that it nurtured faith in a supra-historical truth outlining the way of relating to the world. Similarly, slogans triggered correct behavior as routinized resonses but also distance, wariness, withdrawal, waiting and watching, cynicism and boredom.

The effect of sloganized literature has not been much different. Since the

42. Frolic, *op.cit.*, p. 354.
43. M.K. Whyte, *op.cit.*, p. 124.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

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Cultural Revolution, excessive bureaucratic control has led to works in art and literature that are entirely too predictable and schematic to have much impact.[45] How many had agreed with Teng Hsaio-p'ing when he publicly disparaged as boring and unpopular the theatrical works with which Madame Mao had been closely associated since the spring of 1966? The fact that the interviewed refugees unanimously bemoaned the tedium of the permissible films, operas, etc., yet watched them so many times that they had memorized the lines by osmosis (because there was nothing else to see) attests to revolutionary works whose political content has been emptied in the very process of politicization.

The emergence of the non-identitarian moment within the totalizing process can also be seen in the "criticism, self-criticism" campaigns as mechanisms for "unleashing popular energies toward rectifying Party and non-Party ideas." Although Mao's thought was supposed to provide the criteria of criticism, it did not itself constitute a unified and consistent body of thought. Rather, it saw itself as a highly flexible and practical ideology (the combination of "pure ideology," i.e., Marxist-Leninist theory, and everyday practice).[46] This made it possible for young militants in a factory proposing the immediate suppression of all bonuses and the equalization of all wages to recite Mao's passages on egalitarianism and to be countered by workers who responded with other quotations that recognized the utility of collective bonuses or, even more pertinently, asked the workers to run their own affairs themselves.[47] The arguments remained within the framework of Maoist orthodoxy: opposing sides could be supported without compromsie or "backward thoughts."

The same flexibility that allowed Maoism to restructure itself continuously in order to impute a certain meaning in one and all situations, allowed itself to be situationally interpreted in different and often contradictory ways. The fact that innumerable factions, cliques and interests groups could all claim Mao's thought as a legitimating force attests to a discourse that refuses univocal interpretation. Individuals seized the opportunity of a "justified rebellion" to articulate all sorts of personal interests. Strikes in Shanghai and elsewhere were a direct result of Madame Mao's exhortations to large numbers of contract workers, temporary workers and apprentices to rise up against "political oppression and economic exploitation" to which they had been subjected by Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsaio-p'ing and all other "capitalist roaders." But when they revolted to demand an end to the widespread low wage policy, they were told that they had been hoodwinked into following "the evil road of economism and were pursuing only personal and short-term interests." The strikes were later attributed to provocations by "reactionary

45. Berninghausen and Huters, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
46. F. Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 17, 29, 104.
47. K.S. Karol, "Two Years of the Cultural Revolution," *Socialist Register* (New York, 1968), p. 75.

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elements."[48] And according to official reports, it was even possible "to raise the red flag to oppose the red flag," i.e., "to be left in form but right in effect." The idea that Maoist thought afforded any identifiable standard of right and wrong dissipated as the Cultural Revolution continued. The attempt to freeze a community in the certitude of its own cohesion was haunted by insecurity. People coalesced around a large group which commanded loyalty until an opposing group could gather enough strength or prove support from the central authorities, or simply waited until the correct line crystallized (as it invariably did) so as not to commit the costly mistake of prematurely supporting the wrong line.[49]

Indeed, the ambiguity of the criteria meant that it was not always possible to distinguish clearly between oneself and the enemy, the pure and the impure, in an ideological system that so categorized the experiential world. Despite this, the "good society" did try to externalize its own vision of integrity, not as seen from within, in a positive and affirmative way in regard to its historical content, but as the negation of the "bad." The "recall and speak bitterness" meetings, like the movies and operas of past injustices, had as their rationale the idea of keeping alive the memory of past oppression so that aggression might be harnessed for a new socialist order by defining the "sweetness and virtues" of the present order by contrast. The demand for ideological purity entailed an all-out war on impurity. In its quest for unity, Maoism has consistently required the embodiment of the enemy without allowing it space or expression: unified thinking admits no real opposition. In a society that does not tolerate the image of internal divisions in claiming a fundamental homogeneity, the "other" necessarily acquires the traits of an absolute threat that must be excluded. When found, evil must be removed from society.

This is why enemies in China take on the ominous qualities of ghosts, demons, devils, monsters—incarnations of absolute evil that exceed the person (or nation) defined as the enemy. Throughout the attack upon him, Liu was not named, but was referred to as the "top party person taking the capitalist road," or "China's Krushchev" and remained technically as the regime's President though divested of state functions and confined to his home. Not until March 1968, months after the Cultural Revolution's passions had subsided, was his actual name reportedly mentioned—and even then, not on a public occasion.[50] Rather than seeking to punish or to eliminate him, the Maoist leadership preferred to condemn his ideas as a dangerous example of the kind of parasitic impurity that could infect anyone. By disembodying his evil, the Maoist leadership dissociated evil from the person and most importantly, from the position or role. Evil could be found anywhere, at any

48. January 12, *Red Flag* editorial, "Oppose Economism and Smash the Latest Counter-attack by the Bourgeois Reactionary Line," cited in Philip Bridgham, "Mao's Cultural Revolution in 1967: The Struggle to Seize Power," *China Quarterly*, 34 (April-June 1968), p. 9.

49. Leys also makes the point that Mao's thought is a "very mobile, shifting and slippery role." *op. cit.*, p. 18.

50. R. Lifton. *op. cit.*, p. 57.

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time, among friends, co-workers, even within oneself. Turning the process of criticism inward entailed looking for the enemy within oneself. And although Mao had gone to great pains to distinguish between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions, the admission of bad thoughts risked the possibility of opening oneself to the painful and often protracted "criticism, self-criticism" process, or worse, of being mistaken as absolutely evil.

The role played by non-antagonistic contradictions in Maoist thought is interesting. In order to maintain the solidity of its doctrine, Maoism had to account for the empirical distances from the given norm without recognizing those distances as differences that would undermine the homogeneity that Maoism claims. The notion of non-antagonistic contradictions (contradictions among the people as opposed to contradictions between ourselves and the enemy) does not therefore constitute an admission of qualitative differences but only quantitative residues that have escaped molding—but not for long. The term non-antagonistic contradiction prejudges the solution in favor of the ongoing generality or, in Mao's words, "curing the disease to save the patient." Antagonistic contradictions, on the other hand, posit evil as external. Evil can never have the value of a critical judgment that must be countered head on. It is not seen to have a genesis from within but only in the past, in another separate and different society, in Confucian, capitalist or landlord residues, or in the exterior, in the influences of imperialism which has left its mark in the attitude that worships all foreign things. Thus, at the root of all of socialist China's problems is an evil which is externally derived.[51]

The other side of the "good" as the negation of the absolutely evil was a positive image not grounded from within, in the reality of the present. The many-sided nature of this society with its failures, frustrations and internal disjunctures, in short, history, was bypassed for an image of a super-society. Toward this end, all the forces of the cultural apparatus were rallied. To give an example, under the principles of "revolutionary romanticism," literature is required to present its audience with positive and heroic characters to be emulated. The impact of the model characters was not supposed to be weakened by ambiguities in personality which would render them more real.[52] Although the idealization of workers and peasants in the media as what they should be was intended to instill confidence in the masses, their super-self-sacrificing and heroic portrayal merely prevented the masses from recognizing themselves in such fraudulent images and, furthermore, prevented them from realizing a collective profile that was less than a "rust-proof screw"[53] in the revolutionary machinery at the discretion of the

51. Thus, Chang Chun-ch'iao, Madame Mao's ally, was blamed for the food shortages in Shanghai during the 1975 winter. Similarly, the near general strike in the city of Hangchow in 1975, where workers, demanding better pay and living conditions, rioted until troops were brought in, is attributed to another one of the "Shanghai Mafia." And sabotage by the "gang of four" is being used to account for the work and production stoppages everywhere in Kiangsi province for eight months of 1976. Cf. Gayn, *op. cit.*

52. Berninghausen and Huten, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

53. This is a phrase attributed to Lei Feng, in Liu Chih-chien, "A Great Soldier with a Noble Character," *China Youth Daily*, February 5, 1963, cited in R. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and*

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Party leadership. Heroes, the even greater Mao created in an effort to create little Maos, were supposed to become the overarching identity: in fact, they became the moment of otherness whose distance from individuals was great enough for them to reflect upon that difference.

As early as 1928, Mao Tun, one of China's revolutionary writers, wrote: "I dare to state in all seriousness that many of the people who shake their heads at the current "new literature" are in fact sincerely in favor of revolutionary literature. They do not have petty bourgeois indolence or stubbornness as many of you imagine. Although they approach the "new literature" with high hopes and expectations yet they wind up disappointedly shaking their heads for the simple reason that the "new literature" exposes itself as unable to shake off the shackles of 'slogan literature'." The point he was making was that people looked for more than revolutionary passion when reading literature.

It seems that the interviewed refugees have left with the same sentiment, not to escape from a communist tyranny but from a Communist failure. A telling point is that they have not found a satisfactory alternative in Hong Kong. In this respect, Dai is typical. Alghough he has acquired many of the characteristics of Hong Kong's middle class Chinese young adults (he explores new restaurants, buys new clothes, discusses the latest films), he sees devotion to the acquisition of material comfort as frivolous. "Nobody seems to care about important things... There is no sense of cooperation in seeking to attain some higher and ultimately more worthwhile goal."[55] This statement, juxtaposed to his conclusion that China's Communist society was a lie—"It wasn't the injustice so much as it was the way that the leaders denied its existence and instituted policies that made the injustices worse"[56]—disclosed his dim awareness of the truth and lie about a society which at once instilled a sense of transcendence to higher goals while denying its emergence from the given. An ideal genesis was substituted for a real one.

This ambivalent sentiment was reflected when the refugees willingly conceded the necessity of certain social, economic and political policies at the level of national development, while unwillingly conceding the travesty that those same policies implied to any semblance of particularity: "On the other hand, while you have a feeling of security, you also have a feeling of instability. One can never tell where one will be next year. At any moment you can be transferred to another office, to another place. If you want to work someplace else, you have no choice, you must go whether you like it or not. The State's interest always comes first. This is very common in China."[57] The mechanisms which assured Maoism its efficacy also contained the possibility for its failure. The attempt to constitute a totalized ideology that was closed and internally accountable contained within it moments of differentiation

Chinese Political Culture (Berkeley, 1971), p. 444.

54. "From Guling to Tokyo," translated in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, January-March, 1976, p. 42.

55. *Red Guard, op. cit.*, p. 227.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

57. Frolic. *op. cit.*, p. 356.

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that unwittingly disclosed to the individual a self contraposed to the all-encompassing otherness coalescing in Maoism. Muted voices wondered if there were not more to self-determination and taking hold of one's life than to voluntarily internalize a "red" super-ego. They wondered whether or not the individual's critical faculties could so easily be dismissed as partial and hence false rather than true, even if only partly so. Was knowledge really concentrated in a single pole? The bureaucratic management of everyday life disclosed social knowledge as emanating from the social process to be a fiction.

The problem of the lack of individual voice was felt, although no political, but only personal, solution was foreseeably viable. It is this tension that makes the changing political climate significant. Of course, the populace may be merely taking advantage of a momentary relaxation of the political constraints before the curtain falls again. Less cynical and equally plausible is the argument that the Chinese see very real possibilities under Hua and even more so under Teng, who in the past pitted himself against the arbiters of the media and who has reportedly not been above bending a few ideological principles to boost productivity. The Chinese link his name to material incentives, private management of agriculture, "allowances for individuality" and a more liberal culture—propaganda policy. Already the loosening of the vise of censorship and the possibility of a greater variety of literature and art has been forecasted in the press's treatment of the fortieth anniversary of Lu Hsun's death. The honorable mention of this author's role in translating foreign works marks a significant departure from the negative attitude toward foreign things that has prevailed since the clean sweep of the country's bookstores during the Cultural Revolution.[58] Whether such tendencies prove to be a springboard for capitalist restoration; whether the debasement of the "gang of four" in the way that all enemies have been treated in the past signals more of the same remains to be seen. On the one hand, the Chinese may be satisfied with the purge, just as they have always managed to be publicly satisfied with any Party edict as a part of their ongoing rationality for self-preservation. Then again, they may be genuinely satisfied because the purge opens the possibility for a relation to the political in a qualitatively different way from the preceding decade. In any case, the relation between the private and the public spheres remains a problem when the latter is still administered and unilaterally determines the boundaries of the former.

58. "Cultural Winds of Change," *Current Scene*, 14:12 (December, 1976), p. 18.

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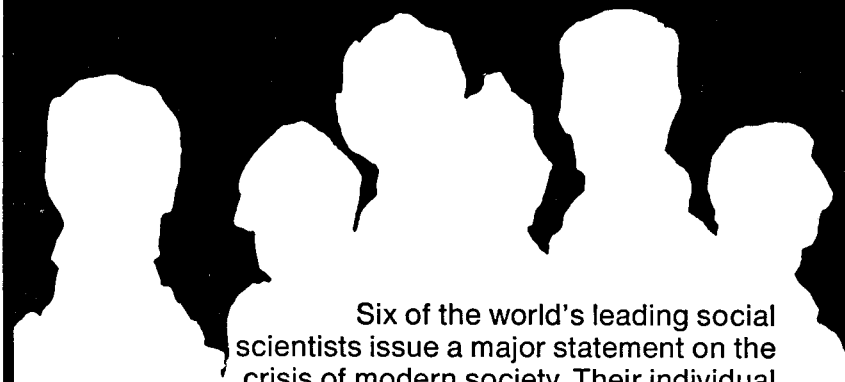

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GRAMSCI'S GENERAL THEORY OF MARXISM*

by Leonardo Paggi

To speak of Gramsci's "general theory" of Marxism may seem inappropriate, even incorrect, given the originality of Gramsci's work. In emphasizing his originality, however, the central role of Gramsci's relation to established interpretations of Marxism is overlooked. Although his early formation took place outside of the Second International, this does not mean that Gramsci was not involved in a close confrontation with it, from 1924 on, when the Comintern sought to Bolshevize all communist parties. Certain aspects of a "general theory" of Marxism in Gramsci must be dealt with since his writings contain attempts to formulate a theoretical alternative to this Bolshevization.

In 1958, Togliatti described Gramsci's thought as a "new chapter in Leninism."[1] Yet, this does not imply a linear development from Lenin, since Gramsci accepted Lenin's main break but also went beyond it. Bukharin's *Manual* provided Gramsci and other European thinkers with the occasion to point out a series of differences between the Bolsheviks' interpretation of Marxist theory and the "Marxist-Leninist" line which became increasingly more distinct from it. Of course, Plekhanov always loomed behind Bukharin. In his *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (1908), Plekhanov had provided the most complete attempt at a Marxist philosophical manual after *Anti-Dühring*, and what Gramsci called the most significant example of "the pseudo-scientific pedantry of the German intellectual group that was so influential in Russia."[2] This Second International "classic" provided Gramsci with the main guidelines for the theoretical elaborations in the *Prison Notebooks*. One must begin here to plausibly order the many definitions of Marxism contained in Gramsci's work.

The central propositions of Plekhanov's study are contained in its first pages.[3] They can be summarized in three main points: 1) the philosophy of Marx and Engels is dialectical materialism, i.e., a materialism integrated by the logic of the contradiction as the logic of movement; 2) the tendency to make historical materialism and economic analysis independent of philosophical materialism is rejected (dialectical and historical materialism are inseparable); and 3) only when this inseparable bond is overlooked does the attempt become possible to *complete* Marxism with foreign philosophies under the pretext that Marx and Engels did not sufficiently elaborate some part of their thought.

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1. Palmiro Togliatti, "Il Leninismo nel Pensiero e nell'Azione di Gramsci," *Antonio Gramsci* (Rome, 1958), p. 35.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London, 1971), p. 386.

3. Giorgio Plechanov, *Le Questioni Fondamentali del Marxismo* (Milan, 1947), pp. 23ff.

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Already in his early writings, Plekhanov identified materialism as the philosophical nucleus of Marxism. Subsequent positions came to be gradually defined during the *Bernstein-Debatte* and then against every attempt to read Marxist philosophy in a different way. These theoretical solutions outlined within the defense-lines of "orthodox" Marxists are severely criticized and rejected in the *Prison Notebooks*. Gramsci offered a different, if not opposed, solution to Plekhanov's attempt to prevent the completion of Marxism. His aim was to open the way to a "revolutionary," i.e., political, use of historical materialism. Already in his first major articles on the October Revolution, the effort to identify the philosophical nucleus of Marxism, expressed as the rejection of any conception which would make history into a "natural organism," is tied to a critical evaluation of major contemporary social phenomena. The acceptance, but reformulation, of Plekhanov's view of an indissoluble link between dialectical materialism and historical materialism is articulated in Gramsci's mature thought through the criticism of materialism in philosophy and of economism (or determinism, or sociology) in the reading of historical materialism.

1. *Absolute Historicism and Humanism.*

In September 1925, *l'Unità* published some notes on Leninism from a lecture that Gramsci had delivered at a party school. They began with the following general definition: "Leninism is the political science of the proletariat which teaches us how to mobilize all the forces necessary to demolish bourgeois dictatorship and to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat. For some, there is no such thing as a Leninism different from Marxism. This is not true. Leninism contains a unique world view without which Marx today could not be understood."[4] Setting aside for the moment Gramsci's interpretation of the relation between Marx and Lenin (at the time an issue in the whole communist movement), we find that the first definition of the doctrine remains unchanged throughout the prison writings.

Political science or, as Gramsci later would say, the science of history and politics, cannot be considered a pure method of analysis. Lenin's practical and theoretical work cannot be considered as a restoration of the analytical capacity of some given cognitive instruments. To reach Lenin's conclusions (even if only, as Gramsci often indicated, on the level of political praxis), it is necessary to reconsider the entire problem of the relation between Marxism and modern philosophy. In this sense, for Gramsci, Marxism is also profoundly monistic. None of its parts can be changed without automatically upsetting the whole system. Leninist political science rests on a philosophical revolution which has placed Marxism in a different and more congruent relation, not only with objective problems, but also with the forms of consciousness of the contemporary epoch. Through this interpretation of Leninism, Gramsci put forth his general conception of Marxism and

4. "Leninismo," in *l'Unità*, Sept. 10, 1925.

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indicated both his philosophical course as well as his arrival point. With Gramsci, the historical materialism of the Second International Marxist tradition became political science, i.e., an interpretive instrument of the process of development of the proletarian revolution. A crucial break, however, is hidden behind this terminological continuity with Plekhanov's account.

To understand what Gramsci meant by Marxism as a philosophy which is also a world view, it is important to recall his recurrent assertion that Marxism marks an irreversible break with every preceding conception of philosophy, i.e., that Marxism is not a new philosophy next to, or contraposed to others, but is the expression of the need to restructure all philosophical knowledge. The break does not take place within the history of philosophy. On the contrary, it is characteristic of Marxism to indicate the abandonment of the most fundamental philosophical categories. The first error implicit in adhering to the old materialism consists in identifying the philosophical nucleus of Marxism through traditional philosophical categories, thus eliminating the task of conceiving its original content in new terms. Gramsci maintains that "the new philosophy cannot coincide with any past system, under whatever name. Identity of terms does not mean identity of concepts,"[5] and that "at the level of theory, the philosophy of praxis cannot be confused with or reduced to any other philosophy. Its originality lies not only in its transcending of previous philosophies but also and above all in that it opens up a completely new road, renewing from head to toe the whole way of conceiving philosophy itself."[6] Plekhanov's materialist orthodoxy is not only based on an extremely simplistic interpretation of the origins of Marx's thought, but does not avoid that logic of completing Marxism which it meant to oppose. From this perspective the choice of materialism constitutes an entirely interchangeable option with the neo-Kantianism of his adversaries. In discussing Croce's attempt to incorporate Marxism as the "handmaiden of traditional culture," Gramsci asserts even more explicitly that orthodox thinkers "fall into a trap" when they make Marxism "subordinate to a general (vulgar) materialist philosophy just as others are to idealism."[7]

It is appropriate here to recall Gramsci's appreciation for Labriola's theoretical proposal which he saw in need of rescue from oblivion, i.e., that "the philosophy of praxis is an independent and original philosophy which contains in itself the elements of a further development, so as to become, from an interpretation of history, a general philosophy."[8] The lack of a clear understanding of the Gramsci-Labriola relation is due to a lack of analysis of Labriola's own thought in relation to Marxism. His approach to the problem of the philosophy of Marxism is a result of a tacit but profound dissatisfaction

5. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, pp. 455-456.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 464.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 390.

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with Engels' thesis concerning the death of philosophy through its dissolution in the development of positive sciences. Since for Labriola, also, science and philosophy are part of a process of development and transformation inevitably leading to their mutual recomposition, he does not consider this process completed for two reasons. First, because the development and proliferation of the particular sciences requires a level of epistemological reflection grounding them and relating their methodologies. Secondly, because revolutions occurring in scientific research, if not adequately thought out and grounded, can become entangled in a series of squabbles inhibiting their free development on the more general level of culture and world view. To ground the philosophical autonomy of a science means to guarantee its correct functioning.

The first pages of Labriola's *Socialism and Philosophy* clearly show the connection between the unfolding of Marxist philosophy and its capacity to develop in different and occasionally hostile cultural contexts. A scientific vision of history cannot manifest all of its innovative force regarding the structure of knowledge implicit in it unless the philosophy of this science is specified. The philosophical terrain is no longer the foundation upon which new systems can be constructed, but rather the battlefield of opposing cultural and political tendencies. Labriola argues that "historical materialism may seem to be suspended in the air so long as it has for opponents other philosophies which do not harmonize with it and so long as it does not find the means to develop its own philosophy, such as is inherent and immanent in its fundamental facts and premises."[9] To elaborate this philosophy does not mean to develop a speculative Marxism, but to find the most suitable means for defending its scientific content. "Some vulgar expounders of Marxism," Labriola adds, "have robbed this theory of its immanent philosophy and reduced it to a simple way of deducing changes in the historical conditions from changes in the economic conditions."[10] Consequently, the recovery and elaboration of Marxist philosophy is an indispensable premise for avoiding economistic and mechanistic reductions of historical materialism. To study the philosophical content of Marxism means to assign to philosophy a task entirely different from that indicated by Plekhanov. The problem is not to define once and for all the external perimeter of the doctrine as a defense against every possible assault. Marxism must be conceived in terms of an "intellectual revolution," which will concern ever growing fields of knowledge to the extent that it will be able to sustain victoriously a series of confrontations dealing with cultural hegemony and world views.

Labriola identified this philosophical nucleus in historical materialism as the philosophy of praxis.[11] The concept of labor, or praxis, upon which

9. Antonio Labriola, *Socialism and Philosophy*, trans. Ernest Untermann (Chicago, 1907), p. 62.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

11. Recently, Sereni has pointed out some decisive textual similarities between some passages of Labriola's exposition of historical materialism and the young Lenin's discussion of the concept

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Labriola, on the basis of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, grounds sociality as the constitutive trait of the historical and human world, can become a crucial element in transcending any dichotomizing temptation which could be reproduced even within the very interpretation of historical materialism. "Historical materialism will be enlarged, diffused, specialized, and will have its own history. It may vary in coloring and outline from country to country. But this will do no great harm, so long as it preserves that kernel which is, so to say, its whole *philosophy*. One of its fundamental theses is this: The nature of man, his historical making, is a practical process. And when I say *practical*, it implies the elimination of the vulgar distinction between theory and practice. For, in so many words, the history of man is the history of labor. And labor implies and includes on the one hand the relative, proportional, and proportioned development of both mental and manual activities, and on the other hand the concept of a history of labor implies even the social form of labor and its variations. Historical man is always human society, and the presumption of a presocial or supersocial man is a creature of imagination."[12] This concept of labor, upon which the Marxist notion of history is based, also prescribes the outer limit of every discourse on the nature of man, becoming, progress, etc.

Thus, for Labriola, "practical relations" are the social relations of production. Praxis is the Marxist foundation of the sociality of the human world. It is necessary to move in this direction in order to defend and reasssert the scientific character of Marxism in the face of the development of other ideological approaches to history. On the other hand, it is also clear why Labriola insists on the immanent character of Marxist philosophy. He wishes to emphasize its different nature with respect to every preceding type of philosophy.

Already in relation to Hegel's systematic and synthetic claims, Engels had stressed that "the task of philosophy thus stated means nothing but the task that a single philosopher should accomplish that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development."[13] Here Labriola continues the theme of the end of the traditional philosopher by individuating in this concept of praxis the way in which "individual thought" is recognized as a "social function." When the "I" recognizes itself as a part of the "we" which predetermines its nature and possible scope, philosophy abandons the path of metaphysics along with every pretext of systematization.

This brief *excursus* on Labriola helps to understand Gramsci's account of the philosophy of Marxism. It is necessary to turn to Labriola in order to

of social-economic formation. Cf. Emilio Sereni, "Da Marx a Lenin: la Categoria di 'Formazione Economico-Sociale'," in *Lenin Teorico e Dirigente Revoluzionario, Quaderni di Critica Marxista*, 4, pp. 50-57.

12. Labriola, *Socialism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, pp. 42-43.

13. Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. II (Moscow, 1962), p. 365.

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appreciate that break in the history of philosophy represented by Marxism, and on which Gramsci so often insists. But this raises the question of the Marxist definition of "absolute humanism" and "absolute historicism." These two themes have allowed the reinsertion of Gramsci's thought into the history of Italian philosophy. Yet, precisely these two expressions represented for Gramsci not the criticism of specific philosophies from a new philosophical "viewpoint," but what made of Marxism the irreversible arrival point of the previous ways of understanding philosophy. Can it be claimed that Gramsci's re-evaluation of the role of subjectivity passes through a philosophical conception which aims to make of man as such the subject of history?

Actually, for Gramsci, the very question "what is man?" implies a metaphysical vice. The appropriate answer to this question can be found only by formulating it in a different way, following the fourth thesis on Feuerbach: "That 'human nature' is the 'complex of social relations' is the most satisfying answer because it includes the idea of becoming (man 'becomes,' he changes continuously with the changing of social relations) and because it denies 'man in general.' Indeed social relations are expressed by various groups of men which each presupposes the others and whose unity is dialectical, not formal. Man is aristocratic in so far as man is a serf, etc."[14]

The advantage of this restatement of the fourth thesis is that it transforms the question by introducing the new concept of social relations of production. The historicity of man is linked to that of social relations, which change with the changing of the position of the various classes. It is impossible to deal with man if social class divisions are ignored. The history of man is the history of this division. The true subjects of history are conflicting social classes which acquire their respective physiognomy in this antagonistic confrontation. Struggle is the only possible form of unity in class society. The ideological character of the question "what is man?" consists in obliterating this by postulating a sphere where such antagonism becomes insignificant. In Marxism, Gramsci adds, " 'man in general,' in whatever form he presents himself, is denied and all dogmatically 'unitary' concepts are spurned and destroyed as expressions of the concept 'man in general' or of 'human nature' immanent in every man."[15]

Even those philosophies asserting the identity between history and man's nature do not escape this ideological flaw. In this case the problem has to do with what is meant by "history." Crocean philosophy's secularization of the great metaphysical question concerning the nature of man becomes real only on one condition, "if one gives to history precisely this significance of 'becoming' which takes place in a *'concordia discors'* [discordant concord] which does not start from unity, but contains in itself the reasons for a possible unity."[16] If it is claimed that men and not classes are the subjects of

14. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 355.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 405.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.

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history, no insistence on the historicity of human nature can avoid an apology for the existing social order. "In each individual," Gramsci says, "there are to be found characteristics which are put in relief by being in contradiction with the characteristics of others." The very concept of man in general will become meaningful only when society will have found a form of non-antagonistic unity. Absolute humanism is possible only by renouncing every philosophy of man, as well as every form of historicism which does not lead to the double identification of the concept of "history" with the social relations of production and of "becoming" with the antagonistic development of these relations.

It is crucial in reading Gramsci's philosophical writings to abandon any inadequately defined concept of history. Though a frequent source of ambiguities, the term "historicism" has been used to indicate how Marxism brings about a radical renewal of philosophy. Historicism reintroduces the theme of the death of philosophy—a thesis similar to Labriola's view that the philosophical nucleus of Marxism must be sought within historical materialism and the revolution of the concept of history. Here, it is useful to momentarily set aside the "compromised" language of the *Prison Notebooks* to see how in a 1926 writing, Gramsci prefigured the general lines of that criticism of philosophy which eventually became a recurrent *leit motif* in the prison writings.

The occasion was provided by a philosophical convention which sought, in the jargon of traditional Italian philosophy, to proclaim its distance from Fascism. Gramsci argues the impossibility and inanity of such a proposal. "What is a philosopher? One must distinguish *philosopher* from professor of *philosophy*. As every man is an artist, so is every man a philosopher, in as much as he can think and express intellectual activity. Often the philosopher must be sought outside the professor of philosophy. The Milan convention, apart from certain exceptions, was more of a congress of philosophy professors than of philosophers. What practical results could come out of a congress of philosophy professors? There were no deliberations or regular business to be voted on. The only practical result could have been in the speeches of different speakers who, as philosophers, had the pretense of placing themselves above the various classes and social relations by announcing the independence of philosophy as a science of the spirit, as if the spirit can exist outside of historical reality, which is the reality of the class struggle. Philosophy is bourgeois or proletarian, just as the society in which man thinks and acts is bourgeois or proletarian. An independent philosophy does not exist, just as man does not exist apart from the social relations in which he lives. Of course, thought generates thought, but it does not come out of nothing just as one cannot nourish oneself with nothing."[17]

Engels' theme on the end of the individual philosopher as the elaborator of systems dealing with problems resolvable only through the development of the

17. "Della Sospensione di un Congresso di Filosofi," in *l'Unita*, April 1, 1926.

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human species forcefully returns here and in Gramsci's later writings, but with an emphasis very different from Engels'. It is not a question of seeking in the development of the positive sciences the solution of problems that have traditionally confronted philosophy. Rather, it is the concept of social relations of production which provides philosophical reflection with a new intelligibility. To recognize its dependence on social relations means that philosophy must realize that there are limits to thought imposed by the existing world. Thus, it must develop into a theory of contradictions, whose supersession depends on the transformation of existing social relations. Gramsci's brutal assertion that philosophy is bourgeois or proletarian does not mean that there are two philosophies according to class perspectives, but that there are two ways of doing philosophy: one conservative and one revolutionary, depending on their acceptance or rejection of the symbiosis of philosophy and existing social conflicts. To use concepts apart from their objective social meaning amounts to doing bourgeois philosophy precisely to the extent that it is a refusal to enter the new ground of Marxism.

In a well-known text from his youth, Marx stated that the history of philosophy shows that in moments of crisis when reflection is forced to consider the real world, there are always timid attempts at reconciling old habits and pressing new needs: "In such times, fearful souls take the reverse point of view of valiant commanders. They believe they are able to repair the damage by decreasing forces, by dispersal, by a peace treaty with real needs, while Themistocles, when Athens was threatened with devastation, persuaded the Athenians to leave it for good and found a new Athens on sea, on another element."[18]

To the extent that it is permissible to use this image, which seems to prefigure the meaning of Marx's successive "break" with philosophy, the definition of Marxism as historicism, far from indicating Gramsci's wish to provide a new account of Marxism, expresses the same need to proceed with founding "a new Athens on another element." The concept of absolute historicism indicates the new element on which it is necessary to base a new philosophy. Gramsci's task is not to prefigure the new Athens, but to point out the path that one must take.

With the notion of historicism, Gramsci is pursuing a double objective. First, he seeks to prevent the philosophical reabsorption of Marxism, as happened with the rehabilitation of the old materialism. Here, the temptation to proceed bureaucratically to a positive elaboration of Marxism has led to the interpretation of the critique of bourgeois philosophy as the confrontation of two systems, preserving the illusion of an impossible victory on a terrain which had to be abandoned. This has meant the avoidance of the specific task of a Marxist philosophy: to indicate how to actually conceptualize the social relations of production. Secondly, Gramsci criticizes

18. Cf. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 53.

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the concept of history in Crocean historicism, which represents the most complete and "modern" vehicle to exorcise the element of class from philosophical discourse. Thus, the historicization of philosophy and Marxism means something quite different from the annihilation of theory into a form of "historical knowledge, as it has been accused of doing.

"For Croce," Gramsci writes, " 'history' is still a speculative concept." One of the most recurrent arguments in the *Prison Notebooks* concerning the ambiguities of idealist historicism consists in the criticism of Croce's identification of philosophy and history. If this eliminates the old idea of philosophy as a system and emphasizes problems gradually arising from real life, it still amounts to the abolition of the most archaic forms of philosophical knowledge and not its real supersession. What differentiates between a speculative and a realistic historicism and decides the dissolution of philosophy into history is precisely the concept of history or, as Gramsci says, the possibility of an identification of history and politics.

"The criticism of the concept of history in Croce is essential: does it not have an origin that is purely erudite and bookish? Only the identification of history and politics takes this character away from history."[19] The meaning of this famous Gramscian claim hinges on how one deciphers this concept of politics. Here Gramsci puts forth two different accounts which ultimately converge. According to one, politics means "what is realized, and not only the various and repeated attempts at realization, some of which fail." The other, more organic account, whereby history and politics are identified, is contained in the *Theses on Feuerbach*. From 1920 on, Gramsci held that anything dealing with the development of the productive forces must be stripped of all technical appearances and evaluated in terms of its political meaning, as part of a larger organic unity constituted by the totality of social relations.[20] What leads to the vindication of the "political character" of philosophy and, more generally, of every intellectual and creative activity, is the same argument which *Ordine Nuovo* has put forth in vindicating the "political character" of the world of production. It is a matter of recognizing a determinate form of human activity as a function of a social totality. The starting point of Gramsci's thought is the rediscovery of the economic sphere "not only as the production of goods, but also of social relations."[21] The activity of the individual professional philosopher can be seen by Gramsci as a "function of political leadership" only as a "function of social unity," or as the 'active social relation seeking to modify the cultural milieu."[22] Having relegated to the level of simple metaphors the two expressions through which the great scientific discovery of Marxism has been transmitted—that the

19. Antonio Gramsci, *Il Materialismo Storico e la Filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (Turin, 1948), p. 217. (This part has not been included in the English translation of the *Prison Notebooks*.)
20. "Produzione e Politica," in *L'Ordine Nuovo*, January 24-31, 1920.
21. Franco De Felice, *Serrati, Bordiga, Gramsci* (Bari, 1971), p. 303.
22. Gramsci, *Il Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 233.

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anatomy of society must be sought in "economics" and that superstructures are "appearances"—Gramsci reintroduces a concept of immanence designating "the ensemble of social relations in which real men move and function" as the only one capable of grounding idealist subjectivity anew as the "subjectivity of a social group."[23]

2. *The Science of History and Politics*

The two definitions of Marxism as absolute historicism and as a philosophy of praxis have two separate functions. The first challenges post-Marxist philosophical discourse that continues to appeal to "history" without clarifying what is meant. The second indicates how, following one of Marx's texts, only the concept of the social relations of production can ground the notion of politics as the subjectivity of a social group. In both cases Gramsci's intention is not to undertake a positive elaboration of a Marxist philosophy, but to recover the basic concept by criticizing the ambiguities of some post-Marxist philosophies. While the definition of absolute historicism leads directly to the mystifications of Crocean philosophy, that of the philosophy of praxis seeks to rejuvenate Marx's "real conquest of the historical world."[24] Its significance lies in its interpretation of historical materialism, while what is at stake in the identification of the philosophical nucleus of Marxism is the possibility of understanding the real importance of the new concept of history.

Already in 1921, when polemicizing against Bergsonianism as a way of salvaging subjectivity which is foreign to Marxism, Gramsci had argued that "to find the main path one must go back to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who from philosophical thought have evolved a precise doctrine of historical and political interpretation."[25] In order to take another real step in understanding the philosophy of praxis, it is necessary to examine those passages in Gramsci where the traditional notion of historical materialism is transformed into a science of history and politics. This change is not a purely terminological one.

Here, any affinity with Labriola's position breaks down, and what emerges is the bond between Lenin's political work and the *Theses on Feuerbach*: the key to the Gramscian acceptance and reinterpretation of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin's contribution is understood not only as a restoration and application of the doctrine to new historical themes, but also as its general reconstitution, which is relevant in political science insofar as it leads to the rediscovery of its true philosophical nucleus. As a result of the relation that he established between philosophy and the science of Marxism, Gramsci could define Leninism as "a unitary system of thought and practical action in which everything is held and demonstrated within reciprocal relations, from the

23. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
24. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 399.
25. Antonio Gramsci, *Socialismo e Fascismo* (Turin, 1966), p. 13.

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general world view to the smallest problems of organization."[26]

In 1924, after the Fifth Congress of the Communist International had placed at the center of ideological propaganda the new concept of "Marxism-Leninism," *Ordine Nuovo* published an extensive essay by Longobardi. It is not difficult to discern in this essay Gramsci's entire subsequent interpretation of Lenin's thought as the historically most advanced interpretation of Marx able to provide a total theoretical reconsideration of the doctrine after the Second International.

In his essay, Longobardi identified the role of Lenin with an interpretation of historical materialism which restored Marxist philosophy's concept of praxis. The thesis of the "double revision" of the philosophical nucleus of Marxism in the *Notebooks* is anticipated here by that of a "double deformation" of historical materialism by revisionists, who saw a phase of peaceful capitalist development as a structural tendency and by orthodox Marxists defined as the "theologians of a theory crystallized in a series of dogma." "They simply forgot that Marxism is a doctrine of action and presupposes action—mass revolutionary action. Thus, while Marx's thought permeated the whole direction of historical and economic studies, in the last decades of the century, even in the orthodox camp, it became an instrument of research, a peaceful method of investigation, a desk doctrine. It was simply stripped of its soul."[27] Gramsci fought primarily the "orthodox" revision of Marxism. If in the philosophical field it identified Marxism with the old materialism, on the level of the comprehension of social phenomena it turned historical materialism into a canon for research since it was unable to make it into a tool to analyze on-going political processes.

Gramsci had already reached this conclusion in one of his early writings which dealt with a problem engaging his whole subsequent reflection: the evaluation of the Russian Revolution. Because of the disequilibrium between the levels of economic and political maturity, the revolution could be disavowed, as it in fact was by a part of the labor movement, by recourse to a certain interpretation of historical materialism. " 'Political constitutions necessarily depend on economic structures: the forms of production and exchange.' With the mere enunciation of this formula, many think that they have solved every historical and political problem... Lenin is a utopian and...the poor Russian proletarians live in a completely utopian illusion while a terrible awakening implacably awaits them."[28] Thus, a determinate political position implies the solution of a great theoretical problem: how to provide an interpretation of political processes in terms of the Marxist interpretation of history. "The canons of historical materialism," argued the

26. Antonio Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926* (Turin, 1971), p. 272.

27. E.C. Longobardi, "Marxismo, Labourismo e Bolscevismo," in *L'Ordine Nuovo*, third series, Nov. 15, 1924.

28. Antonio Gramsci, "The Russian Utopia," in Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone, eds., *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 149.

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young Gramsci, "are only valuable *post factum* to study and understand past events and must not become a mortgage on the present and the future."[29]

This explains Gramsci's double identification of the current interpretation of historical materialism and economism, and of economism and the reduction of historical materialism to an interpretative canon. Economism consists in confining historical materialism to historical reconstructions and thus prevent an evaluation of on-going historical and political processes. The orthodox Marxists' error has been that of having provided an interpretation of Marxism similar to the one circulating in European culture at the end of the 19th century. Croce can be better understood as a revisionist if it is kept in mind that his definition of Marxism formalized the predicament of the orthodox interpretation. In a letter dated May 1932, Gramsci says: "As a revisionist [Croce] contributed to the formation of the school of economical-juridical history." [30]

The solution to the impasse is found in the reintroduction of the concept of antagonistic social relations of production. This concept can ground a general theory of history in which all the problems of past philosophy are dissolved and reformulated. The possibility of shifting historical materialism from the past to the present is a result of the rediscovery of the subjectivity of struggling social groups, of "mass revolutionary action" which provides the image of the present as a field of opposing forces. In the previously mentioned 1924 article, Marxism "is a theory of action, the theorization of human doing, of praxis." But this "human doing" is the meeting of antagonistic forces within a given situation, which, given their degree of cohesion and consciousness, bring about a result initially only objectively possible. The reabsorption of historical materialism as a canon becomes impossible for Gramsci as soon as it is demonstrated that, in Croce's words, political programs can be deduced from scientific propositions by seeing collective wills as expressions of scientifically analyzable objective contradictions.

These concepts are very clearly expressed in the blunt rejection of Engels's thesis that Marx's scientific contribution can be found in historical materialism and in the theory of surplus value. As Gramsci in 1926 replies to Arturo Labriola, who had become the interpreter of this commonplace concerning the previous Marxist tradition, the fundamental point is the "demonstration of the historical necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The use of the political formula should not be deceptive, since it expresses the desire to break with the view of Marxism as an abstractly objective theory: "Already in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx said that the present tsak is not to explain the world, but to transform it. To emphasize only that part of Marxism which explains the world and to hide the much more important parts seeking to organize revolutionary social forces, the proletariat, which must necessarily

29. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

30. Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*, selected and translated by Lynne Lawner (New York, 1973), p. 235.

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transform the world, means to reduce Marxism to the level of an ordinary theology."[31]

The terms "theology" and "speculation," characterizing in these political texts an interpretation of Marxism separated from its political implications, are the same ones used by Gramsci in prison to attack those conceptions of history which avoid coming to terms with the Marxist scientific revolution. "The philosophy of praxis is the historicist conception of reality freed from every residue of transcendence and theology, even in their latest speculative embodiment. Croce's idealist historicism still remains in the theologico-speculative phase."[32] Marxism has shown how the notion of subjectivity of the entire idealist tradition is to be understood as the "form of a concrete social content and the way to lead all of society to fashion itself into a moral unity." If this social subjectivity and its concern for the outcome which it seeks are removed from Marxism, then a relapse into traditional theory is inevitable.

Thus, historical materialism can become a science of politics to the extent that it rids itself of that caricatured concept of history deduced from it, according to which "it was a kind of ledger, with one entry for 'receipts' with a mathematically corresponding entry for 'expenditures.' Five *lire* of capitalism or economic interest under the entry 'expenditures' determined exactly five *lire* of politics and socialism under the entry 'receipts'." With these premises it is impossible to develop an analysis of the revolutionary process. To develop such an analysis, it is necessary to start from the premise that Marxism, "by studying relations among material things, wishes to explain relations among men and does not in the least wish to subordinate men to material things." Thus, "we focus on social relations among men which, if they are a function of relations among things, are not bound to these by means of a bookkeeping formula of 'receipts' and 'expenditures.' "[33] Gramsci's problem becomes one of elaborating a "conception of a Marxist political method."[34] Lenin's method, which consists "in knowing how to do 'natural history,' i.e., how to carry out the most minute analysis of the factors in a situation in order to determine our tactic in relation to it," is the new achievement Gramsci sets against the repetition of a scheme deriving the superstructure from the structure, which regularly leads to the dispersal of the "concreteness of political and social contrasts."[35]

Furthermore, the methodological inadequacy of the traditional interpretation of historical materialism is also evident in more strictly historical research, where its effects have been more diffuse and massive. It is worthwhile to recall Gramsci's distinction between "the philosophy of praxis" and "historical economism": "what importance should be given to 'economism' in the development of the methods of historical research,

31. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 432.
32. Gramsci, *Il Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 191.
33. Gramsci, *La Costruzione..., op.cit.*, pp. 336-337.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 309.

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granted that economism cannot be confused with the philosophy of praxis? It is clear that a group of financiers with interests in a given country can guide the politics of this country by instigating or preventing a war. But the verification of this fact does not amount to the 'philosophy of praxis,' but rather to 'historical economism,' the assertion that 'immediately, as by 'chance,' the facts have been influenced by specific interest groups. That the 'odor of petroleum' can bring serious troubles to a country is also clear. But these controlled and demonstrated assertions still do not amount to the philosophy of praxis. On the contrary, they can be accepted and uttered by those who reject the philosophy of praxis *in toto*. It can be said that the economic factor (understood in the immediate and Judaic sense of historical economism) is only one of the many ways in which the more profound historical process presents itself (the race factor, religion, etc.), but it is this more profound process which the philosophy of praxis wishes to explain and this is why it is a philosophy, an 'anthropology,' and not a simple canon of historical research." [36]

The philosophical "dignity" of Marxism, its completely autonomous and independent nature, obtains for Gramsci only to the extent that it succeeds in accounting for the totality of the historical process. This is why Marxist philosophy can also be defined as a "methodology of history." This relation between philosophy and the science of history characterizing the limits of economism also constitutes the basis of the critique of Bukharin's sociology. The latter is also an attempt to fix the criteria of Marxist social analysis by forgetting that Marxism's fundamental innovation, the concept of the social relations of production, leads to a conception of philosophy as a theory of history. A study of the scientific nature of Marxism employing a concept of law borrowed from the natural sciences is a result of that split between dialectical materialism and historical materialism which has led the doctrine to become subordinated to foreign forms of thought.

Gramsci had begun his discussion with Bukharin even before he was imprisoned. Only fragments of this discussion remain, but they are still quite significant since they anticipate the subsequent position elaborated in the *Notebooks*. During the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, in a paper dealing with problems of the ideological unification of the movement, Bukharin had denounced the existence of forms of "voluntarist idealism" in the Italian party as peculiar aspects of a tendential re-birth of the "old Hegelianism." [37] Bukharin's accusation was related to the traditional charge of the Bordigian left and posed problems of a political nature within a very rigid climate characterized by the Bolshevization of the communist parties which had begun in 1925. This may explain why Gramsci decided to publish in two parts the introduction and the first chapter of Bukharin's *Manual* for a

36. Antonio Gramsci, *Passato e Presente* (Turin, 1954), pp. 183-184.

37. "Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale," in *Protokoll* (Hamburg, 1924), p. 513.

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party school as a didactic exposition of some of the major aspects of Marxist doctrine. But a comparision of the published translation with the original text reveals the presence of an interpolation in the concluding part of Bukharin's introduction which appears as anything but casual or theoretically neutral.

"Some comrades think," Bukharin writes, "that the theory of historical materialism can in no way be considered a Marxist sociology and that it cannot be exposed systematically. These comrades think that it is only a living *method* of historical knowledge and that its truths are demonstrable only when dealing with concrete historical events."[38] This passage and the definition that follows it of historical materialism as a "general doctrine of society and of the laws of its development, i.e., sociology," which summarized the whole meaning of this introduction, was omitted in Gramsci's translation and substituted by another which, under close examination, contains in synthetic form his future response from prison to the interpretation of historical materialism as sociology. "The doctrine and tactics of communism would be unintelligible without the theory of historical materialism. There are various bourgeois currents, some of which have even succeeded in influencing the proletarian camp, which by recognizing some of the qualities of historical materialism seek to limit its importance and deprive it of its essential meaning, its revolutionary meaning. Thus, for example, the philosopher Benedetto Croce writes that historical materialism must be reduced to a pure canon of historical science, whose truths cannot be developed systematically into a general world view, but are only demonstrable concretely insofar as one uses them to write history books. . . . One need only observe that historical materialism, in addition to having been a canon for historical research and having shown its worth in a series of concrete literary masterpieces, has also been concretely revealed in the Russian Revolution, in a living and actual historical phenomenon. It has been revealed in the worldwide labor movement which continuously develops according to Marxist predictions, notwithstanding that, according to bourgeois philosophers, such predictions are to be considered phantasmagoric because historical materialism only serves for the writing of history books, and not for living and actively functioning in history."[39]

Here Bukharin is criticized through Croce. The passage clearly distinguishes between the view of Marxism as a historical methodology and its reduction to a canon. Secondly, the reply to Croce is found not by descending to the level of the systematic exposition of the doctrine (Bukharin's approach) but by upholding, although in a specifically political language, the validity of Marxism as a philosophy by underlining its demonstrated capacity to function as the proletariat's political science. Coming back to this point in the *Notebooks*, Gramsci writes that "In the final section of the introduction the

38. Nikolai Bucharin, *Theorie des historischen Materialismus* (Hamburg, 1922), p. 8.
39. The text of this "translation" can be found in the archives of the Italian Communist Party.

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author is incapable of replying to those critics who maintain that the philosophy of praxis can live only in concrete works of history. He does not succeed in elaborating the concept of philosophy of praxis as 'historical methodology,' and of that in turn as 'philosophy,' as the only concrete philosophy. That is to say he does not succeed in posing and resolving, from the point of view of the real dialectic, the problem which Croce has posed and has attempted to resolve from the speculative point of view."[40]

Once again, the problem is to identify history and philosophy and by means of the concept of social relations of production come to an identification of history and politics. Furthermore, Gramsci adds, to accept the thesis that Marxism "is realized in the concrete study of past history, and in the current activity of creating new history," does not amount to pulverizing Marxism's theoretical nucleus into a purely empirical casuistry, since "even if the facts are always unique and changeable in the flux of the movement of history, the concepts can be theorized."[41] Generalizations of a purely empirical casuistry are reached by substituting for the exposition of method the description of some possible uniformities, in which the material variety of concrete historical processes is preventively inserted. The criticism of Bukharin's concept of law is not an attack on the objectivity of the historical process, but reiterates the impossibility of confusing the theory with the method of the successive *generalizations*. At this point the problem becomes one of the logic of historical knowledge. "The historical dialectic is replaced by the law of causality and the search for regularity, normality, and uniformity. But how can one derive from this way of seeing things the overcoming, the 'overthrow' of praxis? In mechanical terms, the effect can never transcend the cause of the system of causes, and therefore can have no development other than the flat vulgar development of evolutionism." [42]

3. *The Dialectic*

In an anonymous note in *Rinascita* in 1945, Togliatti characterized the relation between Gramsci and Labriola as follows: "Marxist scholars recognize in Labriola a tendency towards a certain onesided, limited and ultimately fatalistic interpretation of the doctrines of scientific socialism. It is this tendency which led Labriola to seriously err, for example, concerning Italian colonialism and, more generally, made his role as a socialist theorist in Italy rather impotent. Antonio Gramsci, who was an attentive student of Labriola in the finest sense of the word, corrected this erroneous tendency. A Marxist does not and cannot reduce the analysis of historical and political facts to the explication of the simple relation of cause and effect between and economic and socio-political situation. This is how Marxism had been understood by dilettantes unaware that for a Marxist the very relation of causality is much more complex and implies action and reaction,

40. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 436.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 437.

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interdependence and contrast. Thus (as Lenin put it), the historical process is *causa sui* and always contains, according to the unfolding of a dialectical development of real forces, not only its own justification, but positive and negative elements, contradiction and struggle."[43] Togliatti would return to the question of Labriola's "fatalism," but never by so specifically indicating the reasons for a critique and summarizing the methodological innovation introduced by Gramsci in the conception of historical materialism.

The dialectic, in fact, deals with the problem of causality in the concrete analysis of historical and political processes. Gramsci moves beyond the reduction of historical materialism to a canon to the extent that he provides a justification of events as well as a critical evaluation of these events as the outcome of struggles between conflicting social forces. There the victory of one part never means the definitive overcoming of the social antagonism. This antagonism remains, thus constituting its permanent contradiction. The dialectic does not introduce a weakening of the determination in the final instance, or provide a more complex representation. Notwithstanding frequent reference to Engels' letters on historical materialism to allow a greater space to the role played by the multiplicity of factors, Gramsci's theoretical perspective is substantially different. The dialectic relates the multiplicity of factors to the basic struggling forces and shows how a specific outcome is reached through the exclusion of other objectively possible alternatives.

Thus, historical analysis is no different from political analysis, particularly in the examination of historical processes whose constitutive elements are still operating, as when the form of the proletarian revolution is deduced from the form taken by the bourgeois revolution. For this reason, there is a close relation between Labriola's historical methodology and his inability to provide concrete political indications for the development of the socialist movement. His interpretation of Marxism is destined to remain a cultural fact which never penetrates to the level of political battles. Consequently, Labriola's interpretation and use of historical materialism tends to confirm the Crocean theses concerning the impossibility of deducing political programs from scientific propositions. Here again the Gramscian criticism of economism corresponds with that of the Crocean (and orthodox) revision of historical materialism.

Accordingly, Gramsci rejects the very formula of a "materialist dialectics" and documents the specific meaning of the "rational" Marxist dialectic. The procedure is similar to the rejection of materialism as the content of Marxist philosophy and the rejection of the consequent dichotomy between philosophy and the science of history. From these premises, the dialectic cannot be understood "as a chapter of formal logic and not as a logic of its own, that is, a theory of knowledge."[44] Gramsci rejects the presentation of the

43. "Lezione di Marxismo," in *Rinascita,* II:3 (March, 1945).
44. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.,* p. 456.

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dialectic as a logic of movement contraposed to a logic of stasis. Rather, he defines it as "the very marrow of historiography and the science of politics."[45] The emphasis is on the double nature of the "general theory" or of "philosophy": its irreducibility to a preconstituted framework and its ability to provide the very possibility of a concrete, applied, scientific knowledge of historical processes.

In this conception of the dialectic as the mode of expression of Marxist causality, Gramsci singles out two fundamental moments. First, there is the dialectic as the foundation of the Marxist vision of social development, rooted in the anti-utopian polemics of *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Here, the dialectic is understood as *antagonism*. Against a dialectic of distincts, which is elsewhere regarded as a heuristic proposal, Gramsci carries out the same re-evaluation of Hegelian dialectic that Marx did in relation to Proudhon. According to Marx, "to find complete truth, the idea, in all its fullness, the synthetic formula that is to annihilate the contradiction, this is the problem of social genius." And further on: "The *philanthropic* school is the humanitarian school carried to perfection. It denies the necessity of antagonism; it wants to turn all men bourgeois; it wants to realize theory in so far as it is distinguished from practice and contains no antagonism. It goes without saying that, in theory, it is easy to make an abstraction of the contradictions that are met with at every moment in actual reality."[46]

So far, then, the dialectic designates the existence of antagonisms between opposing social forces, whose recognition constitutes the indispensable premise for every subsequent scientific analysis. To overlook this situation is not merely a theoretical error, but amounts to taking an ideological and political position. In this case, the problem is to restore the suppressed elements in the criticism of the apologetical position. But in addition to the objectively given form of social development, for Gramsci the dialectic is also the cognitive *method* necessary to gain a concrete and realistic representation of the antagonistic social unity. The dialectic is the tool needed to gain knowledge of the *unity, specificity,* and *concreteness* of social phenomena by organically relating the otherwise separate and juxtaposed individual constitutive elements. In this sense, the dialectic is the best way to re-introduce, and at the same time provide an empirical verification, of the structured Marxist concept of history.

In the "science of dialectics, the theory of knowledge," Gramsci says, "the general concepts of history, politics, and economics are interwoven in an organic unity." Once again, the peculiarity of Marxism is seen in its ability to provide a theory of history where "one cannot separate politics and economics from history."[47] For this reason, the discussion concerning the three constitutive elements of Marxism can only be understood as an account of the

45. *Ibid.*, p. 435.
46. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow, n.d.), p. 113 and pp. 119-120.
47. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 431.

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historical genesis of the doctrine, which leaves untouched the task of providing "the synthetic unity" of its original parts. In the elaboration and concrete application of this second meaning of the dialectic, Gramsci has as his main reference point the theoretical patrimony accumulated by the Leninist political elaboration.

In March, 1925, during the Fourth Executive meeting of the Communist International in which Gramsci participated as head of the Italian delegation, the first issue of the theoretical journal *Bolshevik* was published containing the important chapter "On the Question of Dialectics" excerpted from Lenin's still unpublished *Philosophical Notebooks*.[48] The journal's aim, as became all too clear in later years, was to completely restore Plekhanov's variety of dialectical materialism—a doctrine which had been eclipsed after the first world war by the Western Marxists' rediscovery of Hegel. Gramsci's appropriation of Lenin's elaboration of the dialectic was not only completely different from the way it was being presented by Marxism-Leninism, but it also differed from the interpretations provided by the left philosophers in the German Communist Party. Thus, in January, 1926, by devoting a special column to an anthology of Leninist texts, *l'Unità* exemplified Lenin's position on the dialectic by publishing the following account of the difference between the dialectic and eclecticism: "A tumbler is assuredly both a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel. But there are more than these two properties, qualities or facets to it; there are an infinite number of them, an infinite number of 'mediacies' and interrelationships with the rest of the world. A tumbler is a heavy object which can be used as a missile; it can serve as a paper-weight, a receptacle for a captive butterfly, or a valuable object with an artistic engraving or design, and this has nothing at all to do with whether or not it can be used for drinking, is made of glass, is cylindrical or not quite, and so on and so forth. Moreover, if I needed a tumbler just now for drinking, it would not in the least matter how cylindrical it was, and whether it was actually made of glass; what would matter though would be whether it had any holes in the bottom, or anything that would cut my lips when I drank, etc. But if I did not need a tumbler for drinking but for a purpose that could be served by any glass cylinder, a tumbler with a cracked bottom or without one at all would do just as well, etc. Formal logic, which is as far as schools go (and should go, with suitable abridgements for the lower forms), deals with formal definitions, draws on what is most common, or glaring, and stops there. When two or more different definitions are taken and combined at random (a glass cylinder and a drinking vessel), the result is an eclectic definition which is indicative of different facets of the object, and nothing more. Dialectical logic demands that we should go further. Firstly, if we are to have a true knowledge of an object we must look at and examine all its facets, its connections and 'mediacies'. That is something we cannot ever hope

48. V.I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics," in his *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1961), vol. 38, pp. 355-363.

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to achieve completely, but the role of comprehensiveness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity. Secondly, dialectical logic requires that an object should be taken in development, in change, in 'self-movement' (as Hegel sometimes puts it). This is not immediately obvious in respect of such an object as a tumbler, but it, too, is in flux, and this holds especially true for its purpose, use and *connection* with the surrounding world. Thirdly, a full 'definition' of an object must include the whole of human experience, both as a criterion of truth and a practical indicator of its connection with human wants. Fourthly, dialectical logic holds that 'truth is always concrete, never abstract', as the late Plekhanov liked to say after Hegel."[49]

The choice of this passage is extremely significant. Of the many illustrations of the dialectic found scattered in Lenin's political writings after 1915, this is certainly the most important both in terms of the quality of the exposition as well as in terms of the context within which it appears: an account of how to understand the relation between economics and politics at a time when the workers' state abandons wartime communism for a New Economic Policy. In these brief considerations, Lenin summarized what he considered the significance of Hegelian logic.

In April 1924, Gramsci had published in *Ordine Nuovo* Lenin's writing on "Militant Materialism,"[50] which pointed once again to the "systematic study of the Hegelian dialectic" from a materialist perspective (which he had done between 1914 and 1915) as an irreplaceable tool in the movement's cultural battles. There Lenin called for the publication of extracts from Hegel's works with "related commentary dealing with this dialectic in economic and political relations, readily available from history, especially after the recent imperialist war and revolution." This is not the place to discuss the importance of this rediscovery of Hegel in terms of Lenin's political thought. It will suffice to say that, far from constituting a theoretical regression in relation to the first writings on *Kapital* and on the development of capitalism in Russia, it develops the analysis to include international relations, the various components of the worldwide capitalist structure, and the rapid internal complication of its fundamental contradiction. These developments were no longer comprehensible on the basis of the capitalist model prevalent throughout the Second International. The imperialist war had not only brought about a political crisis within the organization, but had also shown the inadequacy of an analysis that for more than a decade posed the problem of imperialism and its effects on the labor movement. In 1915 Lenin summarized his theoretical criticism of Kautsky as follows: " 'pure' phenomena cannot exist, either in nature or in society. This is what Marx's dialectic teaches by showing that the very concept of purity is a limit and the

49. V.I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions," in *Selected Works*, vol. 3 (New York, 1967), pp. 536-537.

50. V.I. Lenin, "Il Materialismo Militante," in *L'Ordine Nuovo*, third series, March 15, 1924.

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indication of onesidedness of man's intellect, unable to embrace an object in all of its complexity."[51] A year later, dealing with Luxemburg, Lenin reiterated this point: "the Marxist dialectic requires the concrete analysis of every particular historical situation,"[52] as he did again in 1921, regarding Bukharin by pointing out that the "dialectic includes historicity."[53]

But what does Lenin mean by historicity as the essence of dialectical knowledge? What method could guarantee its possession? A quick excursus over Lenin's notes on Hegel's *Logic* might clarify the matter. Here Lenin emphasizes the Hegelian criticism of the concept of cause by claiming that its cognitive inadequacy must be sought in its inability to embrace the complexity of the elements characterizing a given social phenomenon. "The all-sidedness and all-embracing character of the interconnection of the world, ...is only one-sidedly, fragmentarily and incompletely expressed by causality."[54] But this is only the critical comprehension through which it is important to pass in order to grasp the importance of the knowledge of social processes guaranteed by dialectical logic. For Lenin, in fact, *objectivity* of knowledge is possible only by reconstituting the totality of the social phenomenon. In turn, only the totality can guarantee knowledge of the *specificity* of political analysis. By explicitly reasserting his rejection of triadic schemes[55] which make Marxism into a generic philosophy of history, Lenin rediscovers in the dialectic the possibility to single out, at a new level of the development of political struggle, what he had called "sociology" in his early writings.

The objectivity of dialectical knowledge consists in its ability to catch "the *totality of all* sides of the phenomenon, of reality and their (reciprocal) *relations*...as reflections of the objective world."[56] The truth is reached to the extent that "the effective connection between all the aspects, forces, tendencies, etc., of the given field of phenomena" is elucidated. But, given the very procedure through which one must pass to reach it, truth is by definition always *concrete*. This concreteness, however, is not a starting point, but tendentially the arrival point of an uninterrupted process of approach, constituting the very essence of scientific knowledge. Truth, Lenin repeatedly writes, is a process. "Man cannot comprehend, reflect, mirror nature *as a whole*, in its completeness, its 'immediate totality', he can only *eternally* come closer to this, creating abstractions, concepts, laws, and a scientific picture of the world."[57] Thus, human knowledge can be compared to a spiral, every segment of which "can be transformed (unilaterally) in a straight line." The unilateral extrapolation of one or more data from the

51. V.I. Lenin, *La Guerra Imperialista* (Rome, 1950), p. 87.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
53. Cf. "Annotazioni di Lenin al Libro di Bucharin sull'Economia del Periodo di Transizione," in *Critica Marxista*, 5:4-5 (1967), p. 308.
54. Lenin, "Philosophical Notebooks," *Collected Works, op.cit.*, vol. 38, p. 159.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

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totality to which they are linked by a multiplicity of relations or mediations involves the reduction of dialectics to a sophism or an eclecticism. Lenin continuously characterizes in this fashion the theoretical matrix of the political errors he constantly struggled against. Whatever their specific content, they both share a common matrix—the fragmentariness and thus the subjectivity of analysis.

The discussion could go on, but we already find its central nucleus in the long passage published by Gramsci in 1926. If Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* could have provided an important reference point for Gramsci's elaboration, he seems to have grasped in Lenin's political writings the immense separation between Lenin's concept of the dialectic and the way it had been presented as based on philosophical materialism. Lenin certainly realized that the discovery of this methodology would intimately transform the conception and praxis of historical materialism. In fact, the *Philosophical Notebooks* are punctuated with critical observations concerning Plekhanov. But it is also true that in writings meant for publication he consistently asserted to the very end, the importance of Plekhanov's theoretical contribution. On the other hand, Gramsci's task was to fully articulate the open break between Lenin's political analysis and the theoretical tradition of the Second International. For him, this conception of the dialectic was the most complete and mature weapon for attacking philosophical materialism *and* every economistic practice of historical materialism.

In the context of a certain interpretation of Ricardo's role in Marx's formation, Gramsci said that through the concepts of determinate market and tendential law, "the law of causality of the natural sciences has been cleansed of its mechanical aspect and has been synthetically identified with Hegelian dialectical reasoning."[58] Given that the dialectic is the logic of connections and mediations, Gramsci's problem is that of freeing himself from a linear derivation from a given economic base of the multiple aspects of historical and political processes. In prison conversations with his colleagues, in order "to break away from those who accused Marxism of mechanicism, fatalism, economic determinism, and economism, he suggested that they no longer speak of economic 'structure' and 'superstructure,' but only of an historical process in which all the factors took part. Only the predominance of that process was economic."[59]

Only by going beyond the limits of the reduction of materialism to an interpretative canon is it possible to grasp the specificity and historicity of the social phenomenon under examination. For Gramsci, the primacy of dialectical knowledge lies in going beyond both philosophy, "a method of scholarship for ascertaining particular facts," and sociology as an "empirical compilation of practical observations which extend the sphere of philosophy as traditionally understood."[60] Thus, to make the dialectic the cognitive

58. Gramsci, *Letters from Prison, op.cit.*, p. 240. Translation modified.
59. Mario Garuglieri, "Ricordo di Gramsci," in *Società*, 7-8 (July-December, 1946), p. 697.
60. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 428.

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instrument through which Marxism becomes "a general historical methodology" does not mean to reduce its range of effectiveness to descriptive history. On the contrary, it purifies historical materialism of some repetitive and abstract schemes and of its confinement to historiography as a result of its confrontation with other cultural traditions.

It is extremely significant for the whole subsequent Gramscian elaboration that already in 1925 the Marxist dialectic was employed in the polemic with Bordiga to defend a conception of the working class political party that would incorporate its double nature as a voluntary association as well as an objective element of civil society. Some arguments of the young Togliatti, who carried out this polemic on behalf of the new Gramscian leadership, provide the most significant documentation. In criticizing the double error of removing the party from the working class and party activity from the objective situation within which it comes about and functions (this is the theme around which rotates all of Gramsci's battle for a change in the party's political and tactical direction), Togliatti wrote that "one of the characteristics of the dialectical conception of reality is that of never isolating any of the elements of a situation from all others and from the situation considered in its totality and in its development, and to hold that only in this mutual, complete and continuous correlation and inter-dependence of elements in development can its meaning be grasped."[61] Furthermore, the "Marxist dialectic generates a coherent, solid, and indissoluble whole out of the various constitutive aprts of the real world."[62] Gramsci himself, in commenting on the results of the Lyons Congress, defined Bordiga's position concerning the tactical questions arising in the summer of 1924 with the Matteotti murder, as follows: "It has been characteristic of the false position of the extreme left that its observations and its criticism have never been based on an examination, profound or superficial, of power relations and the general conditions of Italian society. Thus, it became very clear that the very method of the extreme left, which is claimed to be dialectical, is not the method of Marx's own materialistic dialectic, but the old method of conceptual dialectic of pre-Marxist and even pre-Hegelian philosophy."[63]

Clearly, it is a matter of paraphrasing expressions recurring in Lenin's political writings. That they return with particular frequency precisely in relation to the question of the party is not only a consequence of political urgency, but also of the isolation of a line of analysis leading to the elaboration of the concept of the "historical bloc": "The complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production." In the reciprocity between structure and superstructure, Gramsci says, lies "the real dialectical process."[64]

61. Palmiro Togliatti, *Opere*, edited by Ernesto Ragionieri, vol. I, 1917-1926 (Rome, 1967), p. 652.
62. Togliatti, *Opere, op.cit.*, vol. II, 1926-1929 (Rome, 1972), p. 21.
63. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista, 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 102.
64. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 366.

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4. *Introduction to the Ethico-Political Element.*

In order to follow the concrete evolution of Gramsci's analysis in developing the notion of historical materialism as political science, it is necessary to pose a further question concerning the introduction of the ethico-political element. A brief note in the *Notebooks* reads as follows: "Elements of ethico-political history in the philosophy of praxis: the concept of hegemony, the re-evaluation of the philosophical front, the systematic study of the function of intellectuals in historical and governmental life, and the doctrine of the political party as the vanguard of every progressive historical movement."[65] On closer examination, the excerpt turns out to be a kind of conceptual summary of all of Gramsci's research. In fact, each of the individual stages articulating Gramsci's critical confrontation with the Marxist tradition—from the recovery of the concept of the social relations of production as the axis of the doctrine, to the criticism of historical materialism as an interpretative canon, to the identification of the dialectic as the means for determining the unity of the social order—finds its arrival point and mode of expression in the introduction of the ethico-political element. All of Gramsci's research rotates around one question, best expressed in his own words: "How does the historical movement arise on the structural basis?"[66]

Having abandoned the principle of linear causality, it is necessary to indicate how to overcome the dichotomy between structure and superstructure, which has generated all sorts of economistic superstitions and led to the reabsorption of Marxism within the framework of traditional culture. The ethico-political dimension prevents historical forces from turning into fantastic shadows of a "hidden god." They become, instead, integral parts of a single social process. Thus, the establishment of "the 'catharctic' moment," i.e., the identification of the way in which the shift from economics to politics takes place, becomes for Gramsci "the starting point of all the philosophy of praxis,"[67] and "the crux of all the questions that have arisen around the philosophy of praxis."[68] For this reason, the theory of hegemony is necessary to preserve and fulfill the promises implicit in the Marxist conception of history. Likewise, the beginning of a concrete governmental experience with the October Revolution has major theoretical significance: "epistemological" relevance.

The theory of the intellectuals and of the political party are the answers to the problem. "Every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential funciton in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields."[69] The modern political party, the

65. Gramsci, *Il Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 203.
66. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 431.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 432.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

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organizational form of a specific class in late capitalism, performs a function without which social development is no longer possible. Its function is similar to that which the State carries out for the whole of civil society.

It is not the purpose of this essay to evaluate Gramsci's historical and political analyses, but only to examine the theoretical framework which sustained them. In order to do so, it is important to dwell for a moment on Gramsci's interpretation of the 1859 "Preface" which became pivotal for all earlier expositions of historical materialism. Gramsci distinguishes two parts within the "Preface," attributing to each clearly distinct functions in the theoretical construction of Marxism. First, for Gramsci, the claim that men become aware of structural contradictions at the level of ideology entails no possibility of knowing the concrete forms of development. It merely has philosophical meaning, at the level of the theory of knowledge. Here Marx is understood as considering not only the "psychological and moral" meaning of ideologies as an aid in the process of organizing of the masses, but also a new way to pose the problem of the "objectivity" of knowledge.[70] Secondly, Gramsci takes it as a fundamental theoretical claim necessary for a political and historical analysis that part in the "Preface" according to which social formations do not perish until they have fully developed all the productive forces that they can, and that mankind poses only problems for whose solutions the objective conditions already exist. Gramsci claims that: "Only on this basis can all mechanicisms and every trace of the superstitiously 'miraculous' be eliminated, and it is on this basis that the problem of the formation of active political groups, and, in the last analysis, even the problem of the historical function of great personalities must be posed."[71]

This means to break with the traditional interpretation based on a relation between the capitalist development of the productive forces and the working class' numerical, organizational and political growth. The Italian experience has shown that it is possible to have regressions, as well as "withdrawals" from strategic positions already conquered (this is Lenin's teaching), thus necessitating a reconstruction of the movement. Gramsci does not underemphasize the objective role of the socio-economic sphere, but rejects the idea that it can explain the "catharctic moment" as the process of the political organization of the economic forces. Against Croce's theory of politics as passion, Grasmci argues that politics becomes permanent action and gives birth to permanent organizations precisely in so far as it identifies itself with economics.[72] The knowledge of this identity is a necessary starting point which by itself cannot explain the political outcome of on-going social antagonisms. In regard to the concept of necessity and regularity, Gramsci says: "It is not a question of 'discovering' a metaphysical law of 'determinism,' or even of establishing a 'general' law of causality. It is a question of bringing

70. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 432.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

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out how in historical evolution relatively permanent forces are constituted which operate with a certain regularity and automatism."[73] Thus, for Gramsci, the second part of the 1859 "Preface" indicates that a given structure gives rise to a field of possibilities which relatively permanent and countervailing forces seek to utilize in opposite ways.

Thus, the Italian communal bourgeoisie did not succeed in going beyond the economic and corporative stage and in the epoch of developed capitalism, great mass movements can perish under the adversary's blows without the disappearance of the objective reasons for their existence. The very development of the working class into the dominant class which, through the management of the State, shows its ability to provide civil society with a totally different physiognomy, is not a spontaneous and automatic process. Only the introduction of the ethico-political element allows scientific knowledge to grasp the real nature of on-going social antagonisms.

Historical materialism can purify itself of economism only when it succeeds in providing a correct analysis of "the forces active in the history of a particular period" and in determining "the relation between them."[74] There are three levels of analysis of power relations: 1) "a relation of social forces which is closely linked to the structure, objective, independent of human will;" 2) "the relation of political forces; in other words, an evaluation of the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organization attained by the various social classes;" and 3) the relation of military or 'politico-military' forces[75]—which becomes determining in the decisive moments of a crisis, when the fusion of economics and politics translates into actual force. So reformulated, the theory of historical materialism culminates in the theory of the political party as the historically determined form exemplifying a non-dichotomized relation between structure and superstructure.

The introduction of the ethico-political element grounds the criticism of the orthodox interpretation of historical materialism. From this, two important consequences follow for Gramsci's concept of political science. First, it is not a sociology in the positivist sense of 20th century Italian culture. (This, of course, does not affect Marx's "fundamental innovation," the historicity of human nature.) Therefore, not only must the new Marxist political science "be seen as a developing organism" as far as "both its concrete content and its logical formulation are concerned,"[76] but all political forms cannot always be seen in terms of class conflict. Speaking about the possibility of writing a book "that would constitute for Marxism an ordered system as found in the *Prince* for contemporary politics," Gramsci says that "the subject should be the political party, in its relations with the various classes and the state: not the party as a sociological category, but the

73. *Ibid.*, p. 412.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-183.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

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party which wants to found the state."[77] In other words, the party must be considered from the standpoint of its goal. Secondly, Gramsci's concept of political science is not a "separate" zone of Marxist theory. It can be derived only from a consideration of all of the doctrine's philosophical problems, by retracing all the main stages of Gramsci's philosophical reflection. That he devoted the best and most significant parts of his work to the elaboration of a Marxist political science is a consequence of his notion of the historicity of Marxism.

5. *The Historicity of Marxism as a World View*

When Gramsci in prison wrote that "In the phase of struggle for hegemony it is the science of politics which is developed; in the State phase all the superstructures must be developed, if one is not to risk the dissolution of the state,"[78] he was restating a vision of the development of Marxism based on the functioning and growth of the working class state. For Gramsci, the "historicity" of Marxism is strictly linked to the distinction between the period that precedes and the one that follows the taking of power and to the conviction that the experience of political direction entails the further elaboration of the doctrine's theoretical nucleus and not its modification (which would only serve to identify *historicity* with the *revision* of Marxism).

Thus, "only after the creation of the new State does the cultural problem impose itself in all its complexity and tends toward a coherent solution. In any case the attitude to be taken up before the formation of the new State can only be critical-polemical, never dogmatic; it must be a romantic attitude, but a romanticism which is consciously aspiring to its classical synthesis."[79] The contraposition of the critical and the dogmatic attitude is nourished by the same motives which led Gramsci to reject a systematic vision of Marxism as a philosophy like all others that have emerged in the history of thought. The need not to lose the ground of criticism is Gramsci's expression of his awareness that the concept of the social relations of production poses an insuperable objective limit to Marxism itself. The Marxist philosopher, says Gramsci, also "cannot escape from the present field of contradictions, he cannot affirm other than generically, a world without contradictions, without immediately creating a utopia."[80] The elaboration of political science becomes crucial in Gramsci, given the impossibility of passing to a new phase until the existing social order has been effectively modified. What this means is that the scientific truths of Marxism do not give rise to an ideology or to a general world view, but to a new culture, to a new view of the world. Contrary to Plekhanov's and the Second International's perspective, this is not the product of Marxist intellectuals, the movement's ideologues, or the upholders

77. Antonio Gramsci, "Marx e Machiavelli," a previously unpublished passage of the *Prison Notebooks,* edited by Valentino Gerratana in *Rinascita,* April 14, 1967.
78. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.,* p. 404.
79. *Ibid.,* p. 398.
80. *Ibid.,* p. 405.

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of orthodoxy, but an integral part of the development of social relations of production. The transformation of Marxist science into culture, of Marxist philosophy into a world view, is a process accompanying the modification of on-going contradictions. In this historical perspective of the transition, the original theoretical claim whereby the concept of social relations of production allows Marxism to choose a path different from the one followed by the whole history of philosophy translates into the project of "a new culture in incubation which will develop with the development of social relations."[81]

By concretely articulating the notion of the ethico-political, Gramsci is able to identify, not the content of this new culture, but features of the social and political process which will be its support and form of realization. Elaborating this theory of the party, Gramsci postulates a historical development in which "the formation of a "national-popular collective will" joins with an "intellectual and moral reform." The birth, consolidation, and advancement of the political party up to when it takes power trigger modifications in the ideological and cultural, as well as economic and political character of the dominant "historical bloc": "The modern prince, as it develops, revolutionizes the whole system of intellectual and moral relations in that his development means precisely that any given act is seen as useful or harmful, as virtuous or as wicked, only in so far as it has as its point of reference the modern prince himself, and helps to strengthen or to oppose him."[82] Only within the real historical life of the modern prince is the program of "economic reform" inextricably bound to "intellectual reform." What Marxist criticism has singled out on the conceptual level finds its historical existence with the development of an historical alternative. The individual philosopher's theoretical criticism as the expression of an absolute conception of doing philosophy, gives rise to the "collective thinker'[83] through an examination of how existing social antagonisms find expression on the political level. Gramsci, consequently, deals with the development of Marxism from a critical theory to a world view in terms of the relation between intellectuals and the masses.

The entire discussion concerning philosophy and religion, its possible *rapprochement* with common sense, etc., is not meant to establish the theoretical status of Marxist philosophy, but seeks to identify the whole trajectory of working class experiences in developing from a subaltern to a ruling class. It is an important aspect of the theory of the party, which exemplifies, at the level of a moral reform, that role of reunifying the divisions on which bourgeois society is built. Here lies its revolutionary essence. This explains why "the political development of the concept of hegemony represents a great philosophical advance as well as a politico-practical one."[84]

81. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 341.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

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To clarify how historical materialism, as an instrument of the working class party, can trigger a reform which eventually comes to encompass the whole world view of an age, Gramsci refers to "the philosophical relevance" of Machiavelli's vindication of the autonomy of science and of political activity, and their implications for morality and religion. The transformation of Machiavelli's scientific discovery into Machiavellianism indicates "the gulf which exists between rulers and ruled," and that "there exist two cultures—that of the rulers and that of the ruled."[85] As the expression of a political party which is itself the expression of the fundamental social contradiction, Marxist political science can begin to heal the break between the intellectuals and the "simple" ones, in order to bring about "an intellectual progress of the mass."[86]

In this context, the relation between theory and practice, philosophy and religion, can be expressed in a new dialectic between intellectuals and the masses, reversing the existing trend. The definition of philosophy as a world view comes to mean that "philosophical activity is not to be conceived solely as the 'individual' elaboration of systematically coherent concepts, but also and above all as a cultural battle to transform the 'popular mentality' and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be 'historically true' to the extent that they become concretely—i.e., historically and socially—universal."[87] Universal thought can be reached only in a society which has overcome class divisions.

Thus, the historicity of Marxism is inextricably connected with the problem of transition. It emphasizes all the elements of the transformation of relations between State and civil society necessarily associated with the initial stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The identification of philosophy and history underlying all of Gramsci's Marxism and in terms of which he reintroduces the concept of social relations of production indicatates how to reach a superior cultural and social unity in terms of the ethico-political analysis.

6. *Conclusion*

With the notion of absolute historicism Gramsci pursues a kind of "Kantian" theoretical operation in order to re-examine the aims and limitations of philosophy and to stress the consequences of that recurring tendency to transcend these limitations even within Marxist philosophy, whenever it loses sight of the concept of social relations of production. Thus, Gramsci sought to make Marxism fully conscious of its own identity, to revive its revolutionary spirit, to eliminate the fifth columns nested within it, and to purify it of those old ways of thinking which it tended to reproduce.

The concept of revisionism in Gramsci undergoes an expansion which is related to his way of formulating the general theory of Marxism. Far from

85. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

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referring to the interpretations of the doctrine's theoretical foundations *within* the labor movement, by revisionism Gramsci means every penetration of bourgeois ideology "which sometimes creeps in the teachings of Engels and even of Marx, in the most dangerous way."[88] Already in the Lyons theses, we read: "after the victory of Marxism, the nationalist tendencies over which it had triumphed try to reappear in other ways by reappearing within Marxism as forms of revisionism... Thus, the process of the degeneration of the Second International assumed the form of a struggle against Marxism within Marxism itself."[89]

In the prison writings we find the thesis that the revision of the doctrine can be understood only by analyzing the relation between "the philosophy of praxis and modern culture." Since for Gramsci "orthodoxy" means the "self-sufficiency" of the philosophy of praxis, i.e., that it contains "all the fundamental elements for building a total and integral world view,"[90] he leaves behind the concept of revisionism as it had been understood within the internal debates of German Social Democracy. The most dangerous revisionists are the orthodox Marxists precisely because the theoretical essence of revisionism does not consist in distinguishing between what is dead and what is alive in Marx but, rather, in using his analytical framework according to criteria foreign to it.

To redefine the limits of philosophy means to outline the limits of the world and to furnish a more complete theoretical consciousness of its on-going contradictions. Not even Marxism can go beyond the limitations of the mode of production. It would mean a falling back into utopianism (and every "systematic" vision of Marxism is utopian) but with this difference: while the old utopianism was the ideal expression of a new social class struggling against the existing order, the new utopianism threatens to reabsorb Marxism into the old philosophy. The main concern of Marxist philosophy will be to guard against the temptation to propose purely logical solutions to real contradictions. Its only task is to make them as clear as possible. It cannot add or take anything away. On the other hand, it is fatal to take that road which has already led the labor movement to become subaltern at the moment it claimed to offer alternative solutions. In 1929 Gramsci claimed that "there is already a 'proletarian' intellectuality for the socialists, and it is constituted by the working *petit bourgeoisie*. A peculiar *civilization* of the world of labor already exists and it is characterized by the ideology, feelings, aspirations and the amorphous dreams of the *travett*."[91] Thus, the criticism of individual philosophers is the same as that put forth against a new culture built by the intellectuals of the socialist movement. What allowed Gramsci to elaborate his position was the confrontation with German and European Social Democracy's systematization of Marxism and his clear perception of the

88. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 476.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
90. Gramsci, *Il Materialismo Storico, op.cit.*, p. 157.
91. *Socialismo e Fascismo, op.cit.*, pp. 137-138.

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dangers inherent in the construction of the first workers' state.

Here we find an extension of the concept of "critique" in the subtitle of *Kapital*: "Classical economics has given rise to a 'critique of political economy but it does not seem to me that a new science or a new conception of the scientific problem has yet been possible."[92] As "critique" Marxism can locate the historicity of the mode of production or, as Gramsci put it, of the "determined market." But it cannot give rise to a new science of economic facts which would require the existence of an ensemble of new facts. To consider Marxism as a "critique" with regard to every ideal cultural and political manifestation means, for Gramsci, to reestablish the limits of its intelligibility. It reiterates Marxism's rupture with the existing cultural tradition and preserves it from the danger of being turned into a speculative doctrine by de-emphasing the givenness of the contradictions. According to Gramsci, the class adversary reasserts its domination and hegemony through individuating ever new levels in the "unitary" recomposition of the social sphere, which will remain until they are theoretically and practically unmasked. This theoretical strategy corresponds fully with the political strategy. Through uninterrupted critique it is necessary to progressively reduce the adversary's free space, and to make it possible to inflict the final blow. The primacy of political science as critique *par excellence* during a whole historical phase is not the result of underestimating theoretical Marxism, but of the observation that the critique of the apologetic content, e.g., of the Crocian interpretation of Italian history, cannot be considered definitive until one has reached a new level of the political organization of the Southern peasants.

From a theoretical perspective, Gramsci's concept of "critique" clearly differentiates between the Marxist concept of science and positivist science. As theory, or science, Marxism's "only" is to indicate what is possible before and independently of all facts. The critique of political economy, by grasping the historicity of the mode of production, "puts forward the 'inheritor,' the heir presumptive who must yet give manifest proof of his vitality."[93] The task of science is to establish laws on the basis of already given facts. The task of Marxist theory, as a theory of contradictions, is to establish only possibilities. Philosophy and critique made events transparent and provide a glimpse of the possibility, and only the possibility, of a new ensemble of facts. The realization of this possibility falls completely outside of its field. In this sense, says Gramsci, one can predict only to the extent that one acts and, it could be added, one acts only to the extent that one modifies existing facts. Thus, to rediscover the limit of philosophy as the limits of the world means to rediscover the space that must be left to "will" and "praxis" as the realization of the objective possibility to change not just individual facts, but the very limits of the world. The philosophy of praxis rediscovers the role of subjectivity since it has profoundly understood the distinction between what

92. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 411.
93. *Ibid.*

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can be said and what can be shown. If what one cannot speak about should be left unsaid, the limit of what can be said can be practically altered by changing the world. Thus, the scientificity of Marxism consists in locating as possible that whose existence the science of facts does not even suspect. But for this reason it refers immediately and to what is other than itself. Absolute historicism leads directly into political science, but the latter can rise only when the ground has been conceptually cleared up of every possible automatism or fatalism.

As already indicated, according to Gramsci, an understanding of the October revolution requires the radical rejection of the whole interpretation of historical materialism provided by the Second International. As the previously mentioned Longobardi article argues: "If Marx writes that capitalist society, left to itself, would lead to an extreme centralization of wealth, he never points out when such a process will be adequately advanced to make possible the expropriation of the monopolizers. And when he writes that the capitalist order will be destroyed only after having developed all the production forces which it is able to unleash, he leaves equally indeterminate the point in which this process can be considered concluded. The distinctive character of capital, notes Marx himself, is to develop indefinitely. The hour of death of capitalism, as that of the society which proceeded it, cannot be determined by an absolute accumulation of social wealth, but by the growing difficulty within which this process takes place, by the increasingly stronger reactions that it generates, and by the increased pressure of the proletariat. The truth is that the possibilities of success of a socialist revolution have no other measure but success itself."[94]

European social democracy blames Bolshevism for having carried out a socialist revolution in a country not yet ready for the transformation. Gramsci's answer does not stop with the documentation of the historical peculiarities of Russian society which have given rise to "1789 which is late and a vangard revolution." The problem is a theoretical one and how to do with the nature of Marx's "prediction." First of all, Gramsci rules out any catastrophic interpretation of the crisis, by ruling out a halt to the capitalist process of accumulation. Secondly, he denies that it is possible to talk about the crisis or the halting of the reproduction process of a capitalist society by restricting the analysis to the difficulties obtaining on the level of material production. Thus, on the basis of the 1859 "Preface," it is possible to substitute for the concept of prediction that of the development of an objective possibility which, in order to be realized, must be expressed and articulated at the level of politics. No matter how deep, the contradictions of a society can never guarantee the passage to a new order unless they are organized. In this sense, the criterion that "the possibilities of success of a socialist revolution have no other measure but success itself" is universal. This is not derived from the analysis of a given situation, but from a reinterpre-

94. Longobardi, "Marxismo, Labourismo e Bolscevismo," *op.cit.*

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tation of the role of theory. To reestablish the nature and limits of theoretical "prediction" means not only to rediscover the crucial role of the will (of being in history), but, at the level of analysis, to fill that vacuum left by an economistic interpretation of historical materialism.

Here is where the ethico-political comes in and, not accidentally, it has as its reference point that same 1859 "Preface" which theoretically excludes the very possibility of formulating a fatalistic theory: "society does not pose itself problems for whose solution the material preconditions do not already exist. This proposition immediately raises the problem of the formation of a collective will. In order to analyze critically what the proposition means, it is necessary to study precisely how permanent collective wills are formed, and how such wills set themselves concrete short-term and long-term ends—i.e., a line of collective action."[95] If, in Gramsci's interpretation, the first part of the 1859 "Preface" emphasizes the possibility of survival of a capitalist society, the second part points out the historically necessary, organic, and irreversible character of the birth and development of political and economic organizations of the working class. This entails the possibility of elaborating, not only the theory of the political party, but also the two major forms of revolutionary processes in capitalist society (the "relationship of force" and that of "passive revolution").

For Gramsci, the issue with regard to relations of force is clearly more complex than the respective strength of the armies in the field. It is rather a matter of grasping the complex way in which a class society is structured from the economic to the political sphere, and to represent its movement as a succession of the various outcomes of the confrontation between the struggling forces. In a passage where Gramsci tries to explain the methodology he used in the conflict between the Moderates and the Action Party, he writes: "It seems obvious that the so-called subjective conditions can never be missing when the objective conditions exist, in as much as the distinction involved is simply one of a didactic character. Consequently, it is on the size and concentration of subjective forces that discussion can bear, and hence on the dialectical relation between conflicting subjective forces."[96]

With the re-elaboration of historical materialism in political science, Gramsci goes beyond what had divided "revisionists" and "orthodox Marxists," precisely when he sought a different solution to the revisionists' objections. It has been pointed out that in his polemic against Croce's ethico-political, Gramsci always had Bernstein in mind.[97] Actually, the most significant and stimulating parts of his critical contribution consist in calling attention to the growing role of ideal forces and organized forces in the historical process: with the growth of all forms of regulations and guided intervention in civil society, the Marxist prediction (identified with Kautsky's

95. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 194.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
97. Nicola Badaloni, "Gramsci et le Problème de la Révolution," in *Dialectiques*, 1:3-4, p. 124.

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theory of the collapse) concerning the close relation between the development of productive forces and the advancing of the socialist revolution turns out to be inconsistent. The development of facts requires a theoretical revision. Contrary to Bernstein and Croce, who sought the definitive liquidation of Marxism by elaborating the ethico-political, Gramsci's project is to accept the revisionists' objections by showing, through a radical rejection of the orthodox position, how they are totally compatible with the Marxist theory of history.

But the importance of power relations in Gramsci's interpretation of historical materialism is better understood in connection with the concept of "passive revolution." For Gramsci, this concept refers to the character of the political struggle after a working class withdrawal or a defeat and seeks to provide an adequate representation of the complex historical process resulting in the definitive supersession of an entire mode of production. Its polemical references are the theory of the crash and the Jacobin tendency to compress the whole social significance of a revolutionary process into the *violent* break.

In this perspective, the course of the socialist revolution can no longer be understood by merely acknowledging the slow-down of the revolutionary process. It is necessary to bring about a change in the theoretical perspective which will allow an understanding of the contradictory manifestation of the on-going progressive tendency to replace a mode of production. Already in his political writing, Gramsci began to relate the epoch of the bourgeois revolution with that of the proletarian revolution: "As in the beginning of the nineteenth century when everyone's hopes were directed to the French Revolution, and in vain the reaction and the Holy Alliance raged against it, so today one looks to the Russian Revolution from Asia as well as from Europe."[98] In both instances there was an initial phase of war of movement: a Jacobin experiment which succeeded in a given situation. Then it was followed by a much slower development, studded with "restorations" which never amount to a return to pre-existing situations, but constitute different forms of the political management of an unchanged social content which, however, continues to spread and deepen. If advance into a territory that has not experienced Jacobinism becomes increasingly more complex, the war of movement proves inadequate and must give way to a war of position. The French Revolution was not concluded in 1789, 1793, or even with the Napoleonic wars. It is equally true that the October Revolution did not end with either the assault on the Winter Palace or the civil war and war-communism, or with the introduction of the NEP: "Studies aimed at capturing the analogies between the period which followed the fall of Napoleon and that which followed the war of 1914-1918. The analogies are only seen from two viewpoints: territorial division, and the more conspicuous and superficial one of the attempt to give a stable legal organization to international relations (Holy Alliance and the League of Nations). However,

98. *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 323.

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it would seem that the most important characteristic to examine is the one which has been called that of 'passive revolution'—a problem whose existence is not manifest, since an external parallelism with the France of 1789-1815 is lacking. And yet, everybody recognizes that the war of 1914-1918 represents an historical break, in the sense that a whole series of questions which piled up individually before 1914 have precisely formed a 'mound,' modifying the general structure of the previous process..."[99]

This historical example shows how the concept of passive revolution relates "what is organic and what is conjunctural." Passive revolution, based on the two methodological principles in the 1859 "Preface," guarantees theoretical mastery over a multiform historical process which may confuse the distinction between what is organic and what is conjunctural. Losing sight of this distinction "leads to presenting causes as immediately operative which in fact only operate indirectly, or to asserting that the immediate causes are the only effective ones. In the first case, there is an excess of 'economism,' or doctrinaire pedantry; in the second, an excess of 'ideologism.' In the first case, there is an overestimation of mechanical causes, in the second, an exaggeration of the voluntarist and individual element."[100] Thus, for Gramsci, the recognition of historical truth is impossible without an adequate theoretical instrument. For this reason, to define him as the theoretician of the revolution in the West appears reductive, in light of the rediscovery of his political writings.

If, beginning in 1924, Gramsci's position is characterized by an emphasis on the specificity of the Western European situation with regard to Czarist Russia, his contribution cannot be reduced to the recognition of this specificity. Furthermore, the more one investigates the unique character of the October Revolution, the more it becomes necessary to find at the theoretical level a unifying element between East and West in order to refute social democratic positions. It becomes necessary to show how this uniqueness does not invalidate the perspective with which the October Revolution exploded on the world scene.

The most favorable conditions for proletarian revolutions do not always necessarily exist in those countries where the development of capitalism and industrialism has reached the highest level. These conditions can obtain where the fabric of the capitalist system offers less resistance to an attack by the working class and its allies, because of structural weaknesses.[101] To theorize this possibility was not merely a matter of claiming the existence of conditions favorable to a revolutionary development *even* in countries which have not yet reached capitalist maturity, but also, and more importantly, to have completely changed the analytical tools. It meant primarily the abandonment of the traditional interpretation of historical materialism which had shown itself inadequate not only in the East, but also in the West:

99. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 106.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
101. *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 492.

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not only had it failed to understand the October revolution, but it had also failed to develop a political strategy adequate for those capitalist countries where all the conditions seemed to be ripe. It was precisely in the West that it proved incapable of explaining that the development of the productive forces (which in capitalist societies can continue despite the onset of a crisis) not only constituted a further incentive to socialist revolution, but could also become a formidable obstacle to it. In the East as well as the West, Marxism had to reject the interpretative scheme based on the relation of cause and effect between structure and superstructure. It had to reintroduce the concept of the social relations of production in political science, according to Gramsci's analysis of power relations. In fact, the multiplicity of historical situations was the major stimulus for rediscovering a unitary methodological analysis on the theoretical level. The question of the universality of Leninism raises for Gramsci the problem of the relation between theory and history in terms of the political leadership.

The problem of the universality of Leninism, i.e., "whether a theoretical truth, whose discovery corresponded to a specific practice, can be generalized and considered as universal for a historical epoch," is dealt with in a note in the *Notebooks* that discusses the Rome theses—the Bordighian document approved in 1922 by the Second Party Congress.[102] But rather than focusing on the allusive and loose language of the prison writings, it is better to examine here the text where Gramsci best expressed such a view during his years of political struggle. This is the extensive position presented by the Italian delegation at the Fifth Executive (and read by Scoccimarro)—which, through a polemic with Bordiga, defended Leninism. The thesis set forth by Gramsci in prison is that the best proof of the "concrete universality" of a theory lies in its incorporation into reality, "and not simply in its logical and formal coherence."[103] The position of the Italian delegation at the Fifth Executive pivots around the claim that "actually, Bolshevism has given us a tactical method of universal value."[104] Bordiga's stand in relation to Bolshevism "showed a certain analogy with the view held in the past by Comrade Trotsky, when he contraposed to Bolshevism his tactical method defined as 'European Marxism'."[105] Thus, the problem is still that of East-West relations and of the possible recomposition of each bloc's differences into a unitary methodological analysis, as in Lenin's conception of the dialectic. The political problem is to demonstrate how the tactical differences necessary for the variety of situations can remain compatible with principles. Bordiga's proposal, already contained in the Rome theses, was to establish irrevocable norms of behavior. The danger of eclecticism arises—a danger which Bordiga had already identified at work in the political leadership of the

102. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 201.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Protokoll der erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Moskau, 21. März—6. April 1925 (Hamburg, 1925), p. 291.
105. *Ibid.*

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Communist International. Bordiga's charge was refuted by reiterating Lenin's definition of eclecticism: "eclecticism consists in establishing tactics solely on the basis of a causal connection of two or more factors of the objective situation, rather than in examining such an objective situation on the basis of all its factors, in their totality, considering their unending development from all sides."[106]

A correct tactical formulation is entrusted to an exhaustive knowledge of the historically concrete. This is how the Marxist conception of theory is to be understood. In the contraposition of formal and dialectical logic there reappears the criticism of the role of theory that does not seek to explain the world, but to superimpose itself on it. From a methodological viewpoint, the criticism of Bordiga is analogous to the critique of Bukharin's sociology and Plekhanov's conception of the dialectic. It is first a matter of re-establishing the boundaries of theoretical inquiry and historical analysis and, secondly, of establishing a possible connection: "Only the general lines guaranteeing faithfulness to principles and marking the boundaries within which party tactics must take place can be established a priori. It is not possible to go further than that, because the particularities of each moment of development cannot be known a priori."[107] Furthermore, "the tactical means the International is authorized to employ, find their limits only in the foundations of communist theory and programs. Within these limits, it is inadmissible to predetermine tactical means. Their variety is determined by the given situations and by the experiences of the revolutionary struggle."[108]

If the foundations of communist theory contain a criticism of the mode of production and determine the general features of its supersession, they cannot thereby describe the historical process through which such transcendence can occur. But politics is the way criticism takes on historical existence. To guarantee a method of political analysis means to discover the passage from theory to history. Dialectic as a method is the means through which Marxism becomes the "theory of history and politics." As already stated in this 1925 text, "Marxism is a method of historical analysis and political orientation." But for this very reason, it is significant that "Lenin refers to the past always with one purpose in mind—to learn from previous mistakes. And he resorts to fixed formulas only for one reason: to reiterate the value of the fundamental principles of communism."[109] In short, only if one understands the fundamental distinction between the two terms can the dialectic be understood as the passage from theory to history. To say that Leninism turns Marxism into political theory does not exhaust Gramsci's judgment of its historical significance. It still overlooks the interpretation of the Marx-Lenin relationship. To examine Gramsci's analysis of this relation is to summarize his interpretation of Marxism, and to understand this, one must re-examine

106. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

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the Comintern's elaboration of Marxism-Leninism during the Bolshevization of the communist parties.

By defininining Leninism as "the Marxism of the imperialist age," Lenin is presented both as Marx's true interpreter who avoided the "falsifications" of the Second International and as someone who further developed Marxism in light of the problems of a new age. At any rate, the evaluation of Lenin's work takes place within the context of the history of Marxism. For this reason, it can become the starting point for reconstituting an orthodoxy with retroactive implications. The theses approved at the Fifth Executive explicitly state that Bolshevization implies in every country the recovery of "revolutionary traditions": "To Bolshevize the party means to make it, beginning with Leninism, into the conscious continuation of all that which was really revolutionary and Marxist in the First and Second Internationals."[110] The names in the various countries associated with "past generations of revolutionaries," whose heritage Marxism-Leninism must assume, turn out to be Guesde and Lafargue for France, Plekhanov for Russia, Liebknecht and Bebel for Germany. It can be inferred that the reason the "first" Kautsky is not mentioned with a qualification similar to that used for Plekhanov—"when he was still a Marxist"—is that, being still alive, he still represented a strongly opposed political current. In a nutshell, the point is to restore that doctrinaire philosophical account which had characterized the Second International at its beginnings.

The theses on propaganda, approved at the Fifth World Congress in 1924, already spoke of "a philosophical deviation of some of the intellectual centers of the parties of central Europe aiming at eliminating the materialist essence of dialectical materialism."[111] In 1919 Lukács had rejected orthodoxy as the "guardian of tradition,"[112] and had argued that, for what concerns Marxism, "orthodoxy refers exclusively to *method*."[113] In the attempt to resurrect a concept of orthodoxy meant to recover the tradition and philosophical materialism, the definiton of Leninism (aside from its role in the strategy of development of the Soviet state and society) increasingly comes to coincide with a rehabilitation of the "systematic" notion of Marxism, which Gramsci saw as the main antagonist of "absolute historicism."

Gramsci's interpretation of Leninism does not necessarily relate Lenin and the Marxist *tradition*, but Lenin and Marx as such. His claim at the Lyon Congress that "there is a fundamental analogy between Bolshevization and Marx's activities within the labor movement,"[114] advocates the recovery of the First International as the foundation of a comprehensive theoretical

110. *Erweiterte Exekutive (März—April, 1925). Thesen und Resolutionen* (Hamburg, 1925), p. 18.
111. This is from the published translation in *L'Ordine Nuovo*, third series, Nov. 1, 1924.
112. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. R. Livingstone (London, 1971), p. 24.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
114. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 482.

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interpretation of Marxism. The previously cited 1924 article already outlines a general interpretation. The theoretical authenticity of Bolshevism is maintained on the basis of the October Revolution. Its faithfulness to Marx is not sought for in any formal continuity: in fact, there is no reference at all to matters of doctrine. In the second place, the continuity between Lenin and Marx is mediated by a critique of the Marxism of the Second International which is not limited to its politics, but engulfs its theoretical foundations. What he sees as essential in Lenin's elaboration is to have restored to Marxism its revolutionary theoretical nature and to have thereby rediscovered its philosophical nucleus.

In the 1924 text Lenin is seen as the "great realizer" who has guided the Russian proletariat to victory: "when major contemporary events will be a little more removed and visible under a proper perspective, Leninism will be acknowledge as the practical realization of Marxism." In the prison writings Gramsci discusses again "Ilic's position," and states that "the explanation is to be found in Marxism itself as both science and action."[115] In Gramsci's opinion, Marxism-Leninism finds a theoretical foundation in the doctrine's basic concepts independent of the historical events it designates. The relation between the two must be determined not on the basis of a tradition, but in terms of concepts proper to Marxism.

After the October Revolution, Marxism is no longer just a theory. The transition from science to action means the transition from theoretical possibility to historical effectiveness. Gramsci quickly adds that Marx's scientific contribution does not lie in any specific discovery which would include him in a gallery of great scientists, but in providing an account of mankind's development: no one before Marx "has produced an original and integral conception of the world."[116] No one else saw the possibility for a new phase of historical development as the necessary basis for a new way of thinking and the transcendence of all the antinomies plaguing human thought since its origins.

Lenin is the true heir to the "Theses on Feuerbach" because, by historically modifying social relations of production, he allowed Marxism to leave the phase of critique and begin the positive creation of a new "civilization." Gramsci cannot credit Marx with the creation of a new world view, since he identifies this creation with the birth of new social relations of production. By abandoning capitalist relations of production it is possible to see the limit of the world which has also been the limit of philosophy. This is why "to make a comparison between Marx and Ilich in order to create a hierarchy is stupid and useless. They express two phases: science and action, which are homogenous and heterogeneous at the same time."[117] Marx could claim that the solution of theoretical problems is "by no means merely a problem of understanding, but a *real* problem of life, which *philosophy* could not solve

115. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 381.
116. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
117. *Ibid.*

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precisely because it conceived this problem as *merely* a theoretical one."[118] But he was unable to go further.

In Gramsci, the relation between Lenin and Marx is a result of his conception of Marxism as absolute historicism. The same can be said of Engels' statement about the working class' inheritance of German classical philosophy. In the prison writings this question is dealt with once, where he argues that Marx's account of German classical philosophy cannot be considered definitive and must be re-elaborated in relation to the developments of bourgeois culture. This interpretation is already quite distant from the usual histories of Marxism, according to which Engels' proposal is interpreted to mean that the labor movement's cultural tradition is inseparable from the highest theoretical achievements of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. Gramsci's Marxism explicitly rejects any identification with traditions remote from political struggles and the working class' practical advances. This same notion is confirmed by the other more common statement, where Marxism is seen as "the theory of a class which seeks to become State." With the introduction of modifications in social relations of production, Marxism is no longer merely the theoretical critique of philosophical quandaries, but its "real dialectic." The proletariat becomes the heir to philosophy when, by creating a new kind of state, it proposes the first essential promise of a historical development leading to a new culture where philosophy will actually become a world view and the individual philosopher's critique will be historically realized in a new relation between the intellectuals and the masses.

For Gramsci the strong presence of philosophical materialism in the Bolsheviks and in the Leninist tradition is an embarassment. Thus, it must be deprived of any theoretical import by giving it a purely historical meaning. In analyzing the theoretical deformations Marxism has undergone during its first stages as the "conception of a subaltern social group," Gramsci writes that: "In the history of culture, which is much broader than the history of philosophy, every time there has been a flowering of popular culture because a revolutionary phase was being passed through and because the metal of a new class was being forged from the ore of the people, there has been a flowering of 'materialism:' concurrently, at the same time the traditional classes clung to philosophies of the spirit." And he immediately adds: " 'Politically,' the materialist conception is close to the people, to 'common sense'."[119] The emphasis on philosophical materialism is to be seen as a tax paid by Bolshevism for the backwardness of the environment in which it developed and functioned. Yet, it does not compromise its integrity: "A man of politics writes about philosophy: it could be that his 'true' philosophy should be looked for rather in his writings on politics."[120]

118. Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* edited by Dirk J. Struik (New York, 1971), pp. 141-142.

119. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.,* p. 396.

120. *Ibid.,* p. 403.

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There is consequently a contradiction between Lenin's political theory and his positions in philosophical battles. If, in Gramsci's opinion, there is continuity in Lenin's thought from beginning to end it is to be sought in the struggle against economism. The theory of hegemony, representing the only valid answer to the belated reassertion of the theory of permanent revolution, is only the final state of a theoretical battle originating in the theory of the party. The various "counterrevolutionary" positions fought by Lenin are all summarized in economistic, syndicalist or reformist theories. The theory of spontaneity, which de-emphasizes the role of the party and of theory since "men act spontaneously, automatically, and only under the pressure of events," is but one of the consequences of that "economistic theory" which, in its expressions as syndicalism and reformism, embraces the entire Second International. The general assumption is that economic struggles "were able to lead automatically to the capitalist apocalypse from which the new society was to be born."[121]

If what characterizes Lenin's thought is the struggle against economism and the theory of the crash, then the problem arises of linking this with an appropriate philosophy. The rejection of economism by historical materialism cannot be considered definitive until it finds its philosophical extension. Gramsci seems to realize that through this contradiction internal to Lenin's thought, the latter's most important theoretical innovations could be re-absorbed by non-revolutionary perspectives. Many of the formulations of Marxism-Leninism after Lenin's death can be seen as prefiguring what was to become "Soviet Marxism." It is necessary to begin here to understand Gramsci's defense and explication of an interpretation of Marxism-Leninism strongly opposed by various sectors of the Communist International.

In response to Gramsci's thesis that "Leninism is a complete world view, not exclusively confined to the process of proletarian revolution,"[122] it is Bordiga in the Italian party who objects that the labor movement already has a complete world view of its own in Marxism, of which Lenin is not a revisionist—which would justify the expression "Leninism"—but a restorer. Bordiga's position followed from his affinity with the whole previous traditional interpretation of Marxism. Even the major theoreticians of the German left who had violently broken with the Marxism of the Second International were very cautious in accepting the new notion of Marxism-Leninism. Gramsci's acceptance of Leninism as self-contained system of thought and his rejection of the Marxism of the Second International stem from his belief that a "return to Marx" is impossible outside of the development of the innovative elements brought about by the October revolution. This is why in the 1925-1926 writings Bolshevization is presented as a return to Marx, and the struggle for the diffusion of Leninism is aimed against any form of revisionism.

121. Cf. "Leninismo," in *l'Unità, op.cit.*

122. Amadeo Bordiga, "Il Pericolo Opportunista dell'Internazionale," in *l'Unità*, Sept. 30, 1924.

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When Marxism-Leninism reintroduced some aspects of the Marxism of the Second International and Leninism tended to become the connecting point for a "revolutionary tradition" uncritically including undigested fragments from the past, Gramsci brought in Labriola against Plekhanov. His "formulation of the philosophical problem" became the starting point for developing that world view entrusted with preserving the original features of political Leninism. Labriola was present in Gramsci's early works, but his interpretation of historical materialism appeared already obsolete.[123] When he reappeared in 1925 as a rediscovery it was the Labriola of *Socialism and Philosophy* and not the Labriola of the *Essay on the Materialist Conception of History*. What was emphasized were not the anti-determinist interpretations of historical materialism, but Labriola's approach to the philosophy of Marxism. If, in his early writings, Gramsci tried to bring in Labriola in his antipositivist polemics, he now saw his full meaning within the theoretical experience of the Second International. It is significant that Labriola's name appears in the report to the Central Committee which officially opened the campaign for Bolshevization in the Italian party after the conclusion of the Fifth Executive.[124] In the postscript to a note to Togliatti sent along in October 1926 with his written report of the debates in the Russian party, Gramsci wrote: "I am waiting for the correct and collated text of Antonio Labriola's letters, with the preface by Rjazanov. I need it for the first issue of *Ordine Nuovo*. It is imperative to hurry."[125] The decision to publish the letters to Engels, which were to appear in the *Stato Operaio* immediately after his arrest, was connected with a theoretical and political struggle.

In the prison writings Gramsci did not completely develop this new world view. He merely drafted a project whose realization was entrusted to the theoretical developments of working-class political hegemony in a specific territory. At this point we can ask once again whether it is possible to speak of a general theory of Marxism in Gramsci. The answer is no, if Leninism is seen by Gramsci as the launching pad for a new chapter of Marxism. Lenin outlines a positive tendency for all of Marxist theory and not just parts of it. In Gramsci's opinion, however, the realization of this tendency implies a "new synthesis," at the level of cultural and political development of Marxism.

As the theoretician of the concept of hegemony, Lenin has necessitated a "reevaluation of the philosophical front." He has not, however, explicitly provided the weapons necessary for such a reevaluation, which can emerge only from a critical reconsideration of the relations between Marxism, the labor movement and modern culture. In Gramsci's *What Is To Be Done?* the party is the bearer of a revolutionary theory to the extent that Marxism is critically related to all the existing forms of consciousness, from the masses' common sense to the best representatives of European culture. When Gramsci unequivocally stated that in the previous history of the movement Marxism

123 Leonardo Paggi, *Gramsci e il Moderno Principe* (Rome, 1970), pp. 18-23.
124. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 54.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

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had been defeated, that it had failed to fulfill its task "to supersede the highest cultural manifestation of the age, classical German philosophy, and to create a group of intellectuals specific to the new social group whose conception of the world it was."[126] He was not only critical of the Second International, but also historically and theoretically removed from Lenin's thought.

The Russian working class has succeeded in becoming the heir to classical German philosophy by creating its own state, but in order to break other links in the chain it is essential that Marxism rediscovers its own identity: "To maintain that the philosophy of praxis is not a completely autonomous and independent structure of thought in antagonism to all traditional philosophies and religions, means in reality that *one has not severed one's links with the old world, if indeed one has not actually capitulated.*[127] The "Kantian" operation Gramsci pursues, continually testing his concept of absolute historicism, is the indispensable premise for recreating that new synthesis between materialism and idealism that had been lost in Marx's interpretations. Yet, it does not amount to a new synthesis. Nor did Gramsci ever pretend that it did. Having completed the critique of the individual philosopher in the various forms in which it has continued to be reproduced both inside and outside Marxism, only the movement as a whole will be able to carry out this new synthesis: "The task which at the beginning of the movement was performed by single intellectuals (like Marx and Engels) and by workers with scientific capability (like the German worker Dietzgen) is today carried out by the communist parties and the International as a whole."[128]

This new development of Marxism carried out by the collective intellectual has, so far, not taken place. Gramsci's project remains a project. The working class' practical advances have been accomplished, as Togliatti would stress, "in action." They have not brought forth notable studies or developments in political science. The same could be said of the other Gramscian project of the development of Marxism as an integral world view for the construction of a different society. The fact remains that no intellectual has emerged to master it and make it work. Certainly, it has been possible to turn Gramsci's Marxism into a "fragmentary Marxism." His interpretation of historical materialism as a science of history and politics has provided useful indications for a historiography which, however, has remained underdeveloped. In its first phase absolute historicism turned into a vaguely defined historicist tradition which was already the cultural formation of traditional intellectuals. When the studies on Marxist theory were resumed, absolute historicism aroused unjustified diffidence based on the belief that Gramsci's work denied the role of theory. They were somewhat justifiable, perhaps, when they realized that, with Gramsci, even within the labor movement there

126. *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 393.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 462. Emphasis added.
128. Gramsci, *La Costruzione del Partito Comunista 1923-1926, op.cit.*, p. 251.

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was no creative role for the individual philosopher as such, and absolute historicism and the science of history and politics required a different mode of theoretical production.

To claim that Gramsci's work amounts to a general theory means to reject the "fragmentary Gramsci" but to simultaneously assert that the Gramscian interpretation of Marxism develops through a systematic confrontation with all of the doctrine's crucial points and that individual answers are in a relation of reciprocal implications. It is an "organic and indivisible system" from which its individual constitutive elements cannot be separated. The aim is to filter Marxism through a sieve to purify it of the encrustations built upon it during a whole phase of its history, to provide it with a renewed awareness of its identity, and to establish the possibilities for its further development.

So far the movement has not been adequate to the task. Gramsci's theoretical project has itself become a victim of the passive revolution. But the passive revolution is still in progress. Maybe it will be necessary to rely on its developments for an answer to that question which still keeps Gramsci's work suspended and fluctuating between two opposed poles: whether it contains a hearty utopia, full of useful cultural notations, or whether, instead, it is an attempt to determine the active theoretical and political behavior of the working class in the declining phase of the mode of production when the danger grows that what is dead may devour what is alive. In the last analysis, this divergence has a practical content. Speaking of the concept of passive revolution, Gramsci once maintained that it "presupposes, indeed postulates as necessary, a vigorous antithesis which can present intransigently all its possibilities for development."[129] But with these words he was summing up the meaning of all theoretical research.

129. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, op.cit.*, p. 114.

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PRAXIS AND TEMPORALITY: KAREL KOSIK'S POLITICAL THEORY

by James Schmidt

In Western intellectual circles the Prague Spring, to the extent that it is remembered at all, has become an item of nostalgia. Despite the appearance of a number of important historical studies,[1] there is little evidence that the Czechoslovakian experiment has had an impact on Western social or political thought, even among the radical intelligensia. While "socialism with a human face" may be remembered with affection, theoretical insights come from Frankfurt and Paris.

On an immediate level this neglect is understandable. An attempt to democratize one of the most Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe can hardly be of relevance to the investigation of the more complex forms of domination prevalent in advanced industrial societies. Yet "immediacy" should never have the last word. The specific reforms of the Prague Spring, no matter how circumscribed their immediate context might have been, are part of a broader problem which is by no means historically surpassed: the question of the political forms appropriate to a socialist society which seeks to realize the promise of the bourgeois-liberal revolution, rather than regressing to a level of barbarism far behind it. The problem we face is that of finding an appropriate point of contact with the Prague Spring, a point of contact which is abstract enough to transcend the particularities of the Czech situation, yet still intimately related to the concrete political efforts of that period. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate the extent to which Karel Kosik's *Dialectics of the Concrete* provides us with that point of contact.[2]

The book has had a curious fate in the West. While it garnered enthusiastic notices at the time of its translation into German, French, Spanish and Italian, subsequent discussions have rarely advanced very far.[3] This is

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1. I am thinking particularly of Galia Golan, *The Czechoslovak Reform Movement* (Cambridge, 1971) and H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, 1976).

2. Karel Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study on the Problem of Man and World* trans. K. Kovanda and J. Schmidt (Dordrecht, 1976) hereinafter *D.C.* The Czech original dates from 1963. For a discussion of the book's impact in Czechoslovakia cf. Vladimir V. Kusin, *The Intellectuals Origins of the Prague Spring* (Cambridge, 1971) pp. 49-53. A working out of the influences of Kosik's work on Czech film and literature touched on by Kusin would be of interest.

3. Even Habermas' references to Kosik are, unfortunately, no exception. In *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971) he cites Kosik, along with the *Praxis* circle, Sartre and the young Marcuse as representatives of a "phenomenological strain of Marxism" which misunderstands the labor process as "the foundation for the construction of invariant meaning structures of possible social life-worlds" (pp. 28-29, 323 ft. 17). Where exactly Kosik ever claims that there is an invariant meaning structure to social life-worlds is a mystery. In the new introduction to *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1974) Habermas refers more vaguely to the tendency of Husserlian

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unusual since at the core of *Dialectics of the Concrete* is an issue which connects the book both to the events of the Prague Spring and to recent theoretical discussions in the West: the relevance of the Marxian notion of praxis as a fundamental category of social analysis. In Eastern Europe this concept formed the cornerstone of a reinterpretation of Marx which sought to revitalize elements of his thought which had been lost in Soviet Marxist accounts. While this same use of the term has dominated Western discussions, there has also been an important counter-current which questions whether the very ambiguousness of the notion of praxis does not obscure a tendency at the very core of Marxism to reduce all types of human activity to this one catch-word, often with disastrous political consequences. Consequently it has been repeatedly suggested, beginning at least with Merleau-Ponty's 1955 discussion in *Adventures of the Dialectic*, that Marxism needs to pay more attention to the distinguishing features of various aspects of human practice, rather than assimilating them all to the logic of the labor process. In recent years this view has been expressed most forcefully by Jürgen Habermas and Albrecht Wellmer.

This is the point at which Kosik's work can make contact with more recent western thought. In what follows I will first lay out the basic argument of the Habermas-Wellmer criticism of the category of praxis and suggest its political implications. I will then discuss the way in which Kosik's analysis provides us with an alternative perspective which suggests dimensions thus far ignored in Habermas's work. Finally, I will examine the type of implications for political theory which Kosik drew from *Dialectics of the Concrete*, as a way of reposing the political importance of the Czechoslovakian experiment in a way which makes it relevant for more recent theoretical work in the west.

I. *Habermas's Criticism of Praxis and its Political Relevance.*

In Habermas's criticism of Marx we can distinguish two levels, only one of which will concern us here. On one level Habermas, like other members of the Frankfurt School has questioned the relevance of the categories of Marx's critique of political economy in advanced industrialized societies. Thus the various aspects of Marx's analysis—the crisis theory, the concept of surplus value, the notion of class itself—have been called into question.[4] But moreover, Habermas has raised the further possibility of problems in Marx's basic anthropological perspective of Marxism. And it is here that we come to the question of the viability of Marx's concept of praxis.

Marxists to posit a higher order subject which constitutes the social world, which leads to a problematic interpretation of class. However, inasmuch as Kosik's class analysis avoids an elevation of the proletariat to the status of universal subject and instead concentrates on individual praxis and in his political writings (see below ft. 44) calls for a coalition between workers, students, peasants, intellectuals and office workers, it is difficult to see how this criticism can apply to him.

4. Cf. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* pp. 195 ff. and Habermas *Kultur und Kritik* (Frankfurt, 1973) pp. 389 ff.

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In view of the persistent misinterpretation of Habermas' position, it is necessary to stress that what is at stake here is not the question of whether Marx was aware of the phenomena which Habermas groups under the label "interaction," but rather whether Marx's theory can deal with such phenomena adequately. Habermas has posed the question quite clearly in *Knowledge and Interests* in the following fashion: "For the analysis of the development of economic formations (Marx) adopts a concept of the system of social labor that contains more elements than are admitted to in the idea of a species that produces itself through social labor. Self-constitution through social labor is conceived *at the categorical level* as a process of production, and instrumental action, labor in the sense of material activity, or work, designates the dimensions in which natural history moves. *At the level of his material investigations,* on the other hand, Marx always takes account of social practice that encompasses both work and interaction."[5] This criticism questions the soundness of Marx's notion of praxis, which Habermas believes leads to a misunderstanding of the specificity of social sciences. Once labor and interaction are "thrown together" in the ambiguous notion of praxis the science of man can be positivistically misinterpreted as a study of the evolution of technical productive forces.[6]

This criticism should not be viewed as a mere academic quibble. Albrecht Wellmer has indicated, rather bluntly, what is at stake; if the evolution of the species is discussed only in terms of the development of productive forces, "the emancipation of individuals would then, in fact...be conceivable as the result of a scientifically directed reorganization of society by means of a revolutionary minority governing through an authoritarian regime."[7] The concentration on the revolutionary aspects of the bourgeois scientific and technical mastery of nature, which achieves its apotheosis in the *Grundrisse*'s discussion of the potential unleashed by the machine process,[8] is not matched by an independent examination of the exclusively political aspects of the bourgeois revolution (i.e., the evolution of thinking on a legal or ethical level). While Marx's close connection with revolutionary movements which drew their impetus in part from the carrying through of the bourgeois political revolution prevented him from ever losing sight of the political dimensions of this struggle[9] these political aspects did not find an adequate expression in the theory of social evolution itself.

When transferred to a revolutionary context which does not draw on a liberal-democratic tradition, the theory is open to the type of technocratic misinterpretations which define Soviet Marxism. Technology is viewed as intrinsically neutral, as in the case of Lenin's disastrous assumption that the

5. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 52-53. Cf. Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York, 1971) pp. 67-68.
6. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* P. 62.
7. Wellmer, p. 110.
8. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth, 1973) pp. 704 ff.
9. Wellmer, p. 87.

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Taylor system could simply be taken over by the soviets and would cease to be a repressive enslavement to the machine once production had been socialized.[10] And when this overly instrumentalized conception of socialism was introduced into countries which *did* have a strong liberal-democratic tradition (such as Czechoslovakia) the contradictions became glaring indeed.

From a certain perspective the Prague Spring can be viewed as a *practical* expression of the critique of Marxism which Habermas has outlined in theory. While Habermas has developed a critique of Marxist instrumentalism on the basis of an examination of Marx's theoretical premises, the participants in the Prague Spring were engaged in a practical critique of a regime which for twenty years had treated the public as a mass to be manipulated.[11] While Habermas has pointed to the theoretical ambiguities which led Marxism to ignore the need to institutionalize discourse free from domination, the Prague Spring presents us with a case where opposition to the practice of censorship formed a basic point of departure for a wide-ranging critique of the bureaucracy by writers and other intellectuals.[12] Finally, while Wellmer's discussion indicates the possibility of a technocratic and authoritarian reading of the *Grundrisse*, such an interpretation can actually be found in Radovan Richta's analysis of the importance of the "scientific and technological revolution" for socialist countries which attempted to deck the "leading role of the party" out in cybernetic clothing.[13]

Of course it is difficult to hold Marx responsible for Radovan Richta, let alone for the more dangerous representatives of the tradition. And it would be naive to assume that the various disasters which have marked the course of socialism in this century would all have been avoided had Marx been a little

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10. V.I. Lenin, "Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" *Collected Works* Vol. 27 (Moscow, 1965) p. 258; V.I. Lenin, "The Taylor System—Man's Enslavement to the Machine" *Collected Works* Vol. 20 (Moscow, 1964) p. 153. Cf. the discussion by Frederic and Lou-Jean Fleron, "Administrative Theory as Repressive Political Theory" in *Telos* 12 (1972) pp. 63 ff.

11. For a selection of writings by participants in the Prague Spring cf. Andrew Oxley, Alex Pravda, and Andrew Ritchie: *Czechoslovakia: The Party and the People* (London, 1973). The selections dealing with the "crisis of the political system" (pp. 101 ff.) are particularly relevant. For a more extensive selection of articles from *Literarni listy* cf. Josef Skvorecky ed. *Nachrichten aus der CSSR* (Frankfurt, 1968).

12. Dusan Hamsik, *Writers Against Rulers* (London, 1971) discusses events at the writers' congress and the subsequent struggle over the censorship of *Literarni noviny*. Cf. also A.J. Liehm's analysis "On Culture, Politics, Recent History, the Generations..." in his find collection of interviews *The Politics of Culture* (New York, 1970). Vladimir Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring op. cit.*, is also relevant, especially his discussion of the controversy over the legal system, pp. 28-35. Finally cf. the pieces by Pithart and Kubicek in Oxley, *el. al.* pp. 141-145, 214-218.

13. Richta, *Civilization at the Crossroads* (White Plains, N.Y., 1968) p. 186. His tailoring job paid off. Today Richta is one of the leading normalizers of the social sciences, having presided over the *Anschluss* of the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Science into a joint institute of Sociology and Philosophy with himself as head. This split between technocratic and radical democratic elements in the Prague Spring (at a time, some commentators would link Richta with the reformers) has been discussed by Karel Kovanda, "Czechoslovakian Workers' Councils (1968-69)" in *Telos* 28 (1976) pp. 36 ff. For a polemic between Ivan Svitak and some of Richta's admirers, cf. Oxley *et. al.* pp. 172-182.

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clearer about what was to be done. Rather the problem is that we are confronted with a body of texts which are at times ambiguous enough to legitimate the most problematic undertakings. The common ground on which Habermas and Kosik stand is the attempt to reinterpret Marx's arguments in a way which will foreclose a legitimation of certain questionable types of Marxist practices. But if they share this common end, the nature of their respective endeavors are markedly different. While Habermas locates the problem in the ambiguity of the category of praxis and strives to develop an alternative set of concepts for analysing social evolution, Kosik argues that it is the very ambiguity of the concept of praxis which needs to be maintained, and that in the apparent duality of meaning it contains lies the secret for a renovation of the socialist project.

II. *Kosik's Reconsideration of Praxis*

Habermas's criticism of Marx proceeded on the level of a transcendental-logical reflection: finding that the interest underlying purposive-rational action can only constitute "moving bodies" and not "speaking and acting bodies," he proposes that another knowledge-constitutive interest is needed.[14] In contrast, Kosik describes his analysis as a process of "progressive and regressing" which attempts to delineate the relationship between one-sided phenomenal aspects of some portion of reality and its more fundamental essential structure.[15] He strives to demonstrate how partial aspects, when "unfolded," open onto more comprehensive notions, how one-sided aspects conceal yet at the same time reveal the "concrete totality." Thus, the inadequacy of "purposive-rational action" would not be overcome in his view by simply positing a second interest. Rather, one would have to show the basis on which one could claim that purposive-rational action is intertwined with other aspects of human activity.

It is obvious that Kosik's procedure cannot lay claim to the analytic clarity that the best of Habermas's work achieves. *Dialectics of the Concrete*, though written in a compelling manner, is hardly a model of didactic presentation. A defense of Kosik must rather rest on the argument that he is at his strongest where Habermas is at his weakest. More than one commentator has noted the arbitrariness of Habermas' dichotomy, which turns up all too regularly, no matter what it is that he is investigating.[16] And, though Habermas has never claimed that any human action is ever purely the result of any one interest, a demonstration of the way in which he sees the interests as working together has yet to be produced.[17] It is in the face of issues such as these that Kosik's

14. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* p. 8.
15. Kosik, *D.C.* pp. 36-37.
16. Cf. Nikolaus Lobkowicz' somewhat intemperate review of *Knowledge and Human Interests*, translated as "Interest and Objectivity" in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 2 (1972) pp. 193-209 and Guttorm Flöstad, "Social Concepts of Action" in *Inquiry* 13, pp. 175-198.
17. This has been suggested by John Keane, "Habermas on Work and Interaction" in *New German Critique* 6 (1975) p. 96.

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use of the category of praxis comes to the fore.

In attempting to make sense out of his use of this concept we must keep two essential moments in mind. In its first aspect, Kosik sees praxis as related to the discussions of labor as a distinctively human trait which recur throughout European history.[18] Closest to his understanding of the significance of labor seems to be the notion of *verum factum*, criticized by Habermas and before him by Hannah Arendt as a conflation of technical and practical knowing.[19] This idea, given its classic formulation by Vico, rests on the efforts of the sixteenth century mechanical arts movement to assert the dignity of the activities of artisans, engineers and technicians as practices capable of producing true knowledge.[20] Kosik finds this stress on the affinity between human formative activity and the formal structure of the world itself at the heart of Marx's notion of labor.[21] In his most general discussions of the laboring process, Marx describes "productive consumption" as a "*form-giving* activity" (*formgebende Tätigkeit*).[22] Taken alone, this description could easily lead to a pragmatic or instrumentalist conception of the laboring process wherein man would impose forms on nature with little or no regard for the "slumbering powers" immanent in nature itself. But, an instrumentalist reading of Marx is as deceptive as an instrumentalist reading of Bacon. In both, the freedom to be gained by the "mastery of nature" rests on a mimesis of the forms inherent in nature itself.[23]

But this conception of the laboring process, while freeing Marx from the onus of an exclusively instrumentalist conception, would seem to leave Kosik faced with the problem of an excessively naturalistic version of the laboring process. Is praxis then nothing more than a prudent following of the dictates of natural necessity? No, since for Kosik praxis transcends the moment of labor and also involves a moment of "recognition." Without this "existential moment" which is manifested both in the formation of external nature and in the process of forming a human subject, labor would "cease to be a moment of praxis" and instead would be simple technique or manipulation.[24] Thus it is the struggle for recognition, the "process of

18. Kosik, *D.C.* p. 119.

19. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* pp. 169, 41-42. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Garden City, N.Y., 1959) esp. Section 31. Habermas acknowledges the significance of Arendt's work for his own argument, cf. *Theory and Practice*, p. 286, note 4. It is interesting to note that although Habermas's discussion of work and interaction parallels much of Arendt's argument, he does not make use of her distinction between work and labor, a point I will touch on below.

20. Cf. Paolo Rossi, *Philosophy Technology and the Arts in the Early Modern Age* (New York, 1970).

21. Alfred Schmidt, *Concept of Nature in Marx* (London, 1971) has stressed the significance of non-German materialist philosophers, including Francis Bacon, for an understanding of Marx's philosophy. Cf. especialy pp. 95-97, 19 ff., 76 ff.

22. Marx, *Grundrisse* p. 301, *Capital* I (Moscow, N.D.) pp. 173-180.

23. Cf. A. Schmidt, pp. 95, 161-62, 219 ft. 2 and Paolo Rossi's analysis of *Novum Organum* paragraph 124 in Rossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 ff. It is this important notion of mimesis which informs the earlier Frankfurt discussion of the "Dialectic of Enlightenment."

24. Kosik, *D.C.* pp. 138-139.

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realizing human freedom," that gives the interchange between man and nature a significance which goes beyond natural necessity.[25]

In these two moments we can see at least a superficial similarity with Habermas' distinction between labor and interaction. Is Kosik guilty then of throwing the two together in a manner which confuses the difference between the liberation of man from poverty and the liberation of man from domination? Is there a need to make a firm analytic distinction between the two and insist that they be considered always as separate moments?

Kosik's central claim is that these moments are fundamentally inseparable; if one is abstracted from the other, even for analytic purposes, both degenerate into something other than what they are when internally related in praxis. For his claim to be made good it is necessary for Kosik to show that praxis can illuminate some aspect of human reality which is lost if one simply coordinates an analysis of labor with an analysis of interaction. And what Kosik claims is lost once labor and recognition are separated is a category which has escaped serious analysis in recent Marxist theory: temporality.[26]

Following Kosik's progressive-regressive analysis we can begin to examine this argument by asking how temporality is lost if one considers labor without taking the moment of recognition into account. This, in essence, is the question explored in the wide-ranging analysis of Chapter II of *Dialectics of the Concrete*. Here he shows how concepts as seemingly remote as Heidegger's discussion of "care" and "concern" and the notion of *"homo oeconomicus"* in political economy are in fact differing perspectives on the world of procurement, manipulation and disposability which Kosik terms the "pseudo-concrete." For our purposes the most important part of his analysis is his demonstration of the failure of most Marxian analyses of culture to transcend this same mode of thought. In his brilliant critique of the "economic factor" Kosik demonstrates the inadequacies of analyses of culture which are framed solely in terms of what Habermas terms "purposive-rational action."

The problem which Kosik finds at the heart of Marxian approaches to cultural phenomena is tersely posed by Marx's fragment on Greek art: How can the continued *validity* of a cultural creation from another epoch be accounted for? If works of art are simply products of instrumental action, then it is difficult to see why they should maintain an appeal beyond the time and purposes for which they were created. If they serve as the means to the satisfaction of some particular and transitory end, how can they continue to

25. In addition Kosik posits a third moment of praxis, which will not be of importance to this argument. It could be termed an "ontological moment" since he argues that through the process of praxis an external world is created of a particular type—a type of world in which being can be understood. It is on this aspect of praxis that Kosik based his discussion of the "ontoformative" nature of human praxis. Cf. *D.C.* pp. 138-39.

26. What is at stake here is the problem of a theory of tradition. For a suggestive discussion of some of Marx's failings in this regard, cf. Christian Lenhardt, "Anamnestic Solidarity" in *Telos* 25 (1975) pp. 133 ff.

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fascinate us once that end has ceased to be historically vital?[27]

Against a view which would see art as simply *expressing* a reality, and hence bound to its historical period, Kosik argues that art, like all human praxis, "has an indivisible two-fold character: it expresses reality but also *forms* it."[28] Thus a Renaissance palace transcends the instrumental ends for which it was created in that in addition to serving as a dwelling place in the style common to a given period, it also *forms that period*, by constituting an attitude toward nature, an expression of space and time, and a mode of realizing human freedom, all still a part of the world we inhabit.

It is this element of *durability* that Kosik places at the center of his discussion of the labor process.[29] Marx's understanding of labor, even if we ignore its symbolic and social aspects, simply cannot be reduced to purposive-rational action. As his citation of Hegel as a key point in his account of the abstract moments of the process of production in *Capital* shows, labor is conceived not as a "subjective end" imposed upon a mechanical aggregate, but rather is the premise for the "realized end" in which reason's cunning pushes each act to consequences which transcend the actor's own intentions.[30] Thus the stress on the teleological nature of work which Marx highlights with the distinction between worker and the bee hardly exhausts the specificity of human labor.[31] What matters is not that a specific plan or subjective end is realized but rather that in the process a work which endures is created.[32] And this durable product, by altering the world in which the laborer lives, results in the laborer himself being transformed. The world now includes artifacts that exist independently of the individuals who have created them, yet are still carriers of now surpassed intentions. They are thus "a prerequisite of history. . .of continuity in human existence."[33] Hence any discussion of labor which ignores the moment of recognition fails to account for the ability of artifacts to outlive the original intentions of their creators and enter history. If labor is viewed solely as "purposive-rational action" one will be unable to

27. It must be understood that Kosik has precluded a reliance on a notion of human essence which develops without regard to history.

28. Kosik, *D.C.* p. 71, emphasis mine. Cf. p. 22 where a similar twofold character is attributed to historical facts.

29. It is here that Kosik captures an aspect of Arendt's distinction between labor and work. While work leaves behind artifacts and fabrications which last beyond the creator, labor reproduces life without leaving behind a trace. Cf. Arendt, sections 11-15, 18, 22. This argument duplicates Adam Smith's distinction between productive and non-productive labor, *Wealth of Nations* Book II, Ch. III.

30. *Capital* I, p. 175, ft. 1 refers to Hegel, Encyclopedia I (Logic) paragraph 209; cf. also *Grundrisse*, p. 301 and *Science of Logic* (London, 1969) p. 753. The discussion of "unintended consequences" by the Scottish Moralists is also of relevance here.

31. Previous uses of the "bee metaphor" by Mandeville, Hutchison and Hegel (*Phenomenology of Mind*, [New York, 1967] p. 704) link the metaphor with a discussion of unintended consequences, considerations which go beyond a simple model of individual purposive—rational action.

32. "That which in the laborer appeared as movement, now appears in the product as a fixed quality without motion." *Capital* I p. 176.

33. Kosik, *D.C.*, p. 123.

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account for what Kosik terms the "historism"—the temporal dimension—of the product of praxis.[34]

This of course only develops one side of Kosik's argument, since, even if we are willing to consent that "purposive-rational action" fails to capture all that is involved in the labor process, we can still question whether an essential independence could not still be granted to the moment of recognition. While Kosik does not explore this issue in anywhere near the depth of his analysis of labor, we can find the rudiments of a response in his criticism of Hegel's account of labor in the *Phenomenology*. Since Hegel's description of Lordship and Bondage also plays a major part in the development of Habermas' argument for a separate moment of communicative interaction, it is possible to construct what might be Kosik's response.

Habermas' objection to the account of Lordship and Bondage in the *Phenomenology* rests on his analysis of Hegel's Jena system. While in the Jena system Hegel conceived labor and interaction as separate formative processes, each governed by a separate logic, Habermas charges that in the *Phenomenology* these distinctive processes are merged: "...the relationship of one-sided recognition of the master by the servant is overturned by the servant's power of disposition over nature, just as one-sidedly acquired by labor. The independent self-consciousness...is constituted by way of a reaction which the *technical* success of an emancipation by means of labor exerts on the relationship of political dependency between master and servant."[35] But this objection seems to rest on an overly sociological reading of the episode. The reversal of roles does not rest, as Kojève and others would argue, simply on the technical mastery of nature, but rather involves psychological considerations as well: the slave's mastery of his own passions carried out both under the fear of death at the hands of the master and in the fact of the burden of physical labor.[36] Indeed, if anyone is engaged in a simple technical exploitation of nature along the lines of purposive-rational activity, it is the master. Through the universal tool of the slave, he is capable of transforming nature into an object suitable for his own ends. It is the slave, in contrast, who first experiences the durability of the products of human labor, in that he must refrain from making immediate use of the objects produced.

Turning to Kosik's analysis of the situation we find a very different insight into what is problematic with the episode. Far from the problem being that the discussion of Lordship and Bondage does not incorporate a distinct

34. Historism is a translation of a neologism coined by Kosik to denote the ability of works to manifest their meaning through history. He opposes the term to "historicism" which he understands as an approach which confines the meaning of works to a specific historical context. Cf. *D.C.*, pp. 77 ff.

35. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, p. 161.

36. Cf. George Armstrong Kelly's expositon of the full range of dimensions involved. "Notes on Hegel's Lordship and Bondage" in A. MacIntyre, ed. *Hegel* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972), p. 189 ff.

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moment of recognition, Kosik sees the problem resting in the fact that at one point in the episode recognition is posited without the support of a moment of labor. This occurs at the termination of the "fight of pure prestige" when one of the combatants decides to save his life by becoming a slave of the other. *Why* this should happen, given the history of battles of recognition up to this point is a mystery.[37] Kosik argues that the fundamental problem of Hegel's account is that it presumes that somehow both combatants already know the range of possible futures which lie ahead of them—death, lordship, or bondage—*before* they begin the struggle. But such knowledge would assume the existence of that sense of temporality which Kosik argues can only be the result of an already existing human praxis.[38] Simple animal desire (*Begierde*) is atemporal, ahistorical. Before there can be a sense of a future, this desire must be restrained and cultivated, yet this prerequisite is the very thing which Hegel tries to deduce from the struggle for recognition.[39]

Thus temporality is the aspect of human existence which Kosik would claim is lost once the moment of labor is separated from the moment of recognition.[40] With the loss of this dimension social analysis is impoverished since distinctions such as that between what is human and what is non-human, or what lies within the realm of necessity and what within the realm of freedom, can only be constituted historically. Hence attempts to define what is specifically human must be conceived not in anthropological terms, as a filtering out of those characteristics common to all historical periods, but rather must be viewed *ontologically*, as an evolving relationship between man and nature which continually redraws the distinction between the human and the non-human.[41] Likewise, any discussion of the relationship between freedom and necessity forces the philosophy of labor to transcend itself and become also a philosophy of non-labor—i.e., a discussion of the way in which the realm of necessity founds and makes possible a realm of free creation.[42] None of these intersections are seen by Kosik as the conflation of realms which sould be kept distinct, rather the crossings between them are the mark of their specific mode of existence: as historical entities. "...[H]uman history is more than the ability to store and recall, i.e., to draw ideas, impressions and feelings out of the storage room of semi-oblivion or of the

37. Kojève postulates that the decision to become a slave can only be the result of an "irreducible premise," *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York, 1969) pp. 42-3. Kelly claims that the move is understandable only if one recognizes that there is already present in the ego a distinction between self and other which can serve as the foundation for the later master-slave pairing. Cf. Kelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-97, 205.

38. Kosik, *D.C.*, p. 137.

39. A parallel to traditional criticisms of social contract theories can be noted here. In as much as Hegel's use of the Master-Slave episode resembles earlier "state of nature" arguments, this similarity is understandable.

40. In his critique of Heidegger, Kosik denies that praxis can be deduced from a sense of temporality and mortality which exists as a basic ontological structure. *D.C.*, pp. 122-23 and 131 ft. 49.

41. *ibid.*, pp. 145-151.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.

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subconscious. It is also a particular active structure and organization of human consciousness, of knowledge... Historical periods of human development are not empty casts from which life would have evaporated *because of* mankind having reached higher forms of development. Rather they are continually incorporated into the present through praxis—the creative activity of mankind."[43] An attempt to speak of the past in terms of an interest which constitutes "speaking and acting bodies" would confuse the past with the present, while a view which approaches the past only as an object for manipulation would reduce the past to a means of attaining future goals. Historical consciousness for Kosik is not reducible to either purposive-rational action or communicative interaction. It is a particular and unique structure which can only be grasped in terms of the interweaving of labor and recognition which defines human praxis.

III. *The Question of Politics*

While Habermas argues that praxis leads to a deformation where interaction is reduced to a system of purposive-rational action, Kosik maintains that it is only the realization that labor and recognition are intrinsically inseparable, even for analytic purposes, which prevents a lapse into "pseudo-concreteness." On this level the question may seem quite abstract, but both would claim that significant political considerations follow. Habermas' analysis of the subsuming of interaction under labor has led to his formulation of the "ideal speech situation" as the critical standpoint from which existing institutions might be evaluated. Though Habermas has not yet indicated what institutional from a realization of the ideal speech situation might take, it is nevertheless clear that the notion lies at the center of his political thought. It is a bit more difficult to construct the basis on which Kosik's political thinking rests, but it is nevertheless essential to make an effort in this direction. If the major problem with the notion of praxis is claimed to be its inability to give rise to a politics which does not lead to a technocratic manipulation, then it is imperative to see if Kosik has been able to come up with a viable alternative conception of politics.

Dialectics of the Concrete fails us here, since in it political questions are only implicitly posed and the significance of its argument for political action are not worked out. It was not until five years after the publication of the book, in a series of articles which appeared in *Literarni listy*, that Kosik finally expended his study of the "problems of man and world" to include politics.[44] In 1968 it was possible to draw out what had only been implicit in *Dialectics*

43. *Ibid.*, p. 85. it would be interesting to develop how this differs from standard hermeneutic approaches.

44. All citations will be to the German translation, "Die Krise unserer Gegenwart," which appears in Skvorecky, ed. *Nachrichten aus der CSSR*—hereinafter "*Nachrichten*...." The final article in the series has been translated as "The Crisis of Socialism" in *Telos* 13, and portions of the earlier articles are translated in Oxley, *et.al.*

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of the Concrete. Then the "crisis of socialism" could be posed in terms that echoed Kosik's earlier discussion of the pseudo-concrete. It could be shown how a jargon of "transmission belts and levers" had come to replace all other metaphors in political discourse and thus revealed the extent to which politics itself had come to be viewed as a field of manipulation and technical control.[45] Just as the capitalist market system had been a device for transforming man into *homo oeconomicus*, so this system of transmission belts and levers seemed devoted to reproducing itself by creating *homo bureaucraticus*.[46] Thus the crisis of socialism was above all a crisis in the possibility of political action. Like Ludvik Vaculik, Kosik could survey Czechoslovakia and conclude that there were no citizens existing anywhere within its borders; there were only masses to be manipulated.[47]

In confronting the problem of politics and political action, Kosik is heavily influenced by an earlier theoretical confrontation: Gramsci's analysis of Machiavelli. The dilemma which he explores is the problem of the limits of political power.[48] Power is a concern of Kosik's in a way which is not, and perhaps cannot be the case for Habermas. Habermas' concept of an ideal speech situation has thus far not been used to illuminate problems of political leadership or rational authority, apart from suggesting that all authority must derive from a consensus achieved on the basis of an unconstrained discussion. The ideal speech situation seems impossible to institutionalize[49] and can perhaps best be viewed as a standpoint from which existing political institutions may be evaluated. But it is still not clear *why* this should be a convincing or appealing critical standpoint. While unrestrained discussion may be claimed as a telos immanent in a certain delimited variety of speech acts ("discourses"), it is not at all clear whether this says anything about the ends of actual individuals engaged in political action.

Since Kosik has ruled out any reliance on a transcendental essence of the species, the fateful dilemma of the limits to which human beings can be reshaped is pressing indeed. Is there not a dangerous connection between the capacity of freeing man from past constraints through political action and the ability to manipulate and dominate man? If the essence of man is, in the words of the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach, "no abstraction inherent in each single individual" but rather is "the ensemble of social relations," then does not the possibility of an infinite technical alteration of social conditions give rise to the possibility of an infinite technical manipulability of men?

45. *Nachrichten*..., pp. 57-8.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 56 and the interview in Liehm, *The Politics of Culture*, pp. 398-9.

47. Ludvik Vaculik's speech at the Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers Union, as translated in Hamsik, p. 183.

48. *Nachrichten*..., p. 182. Vaculik posed the same problem in his speech to the Writer's Congress and again in the *2000 Words* published during the summer of 1968. The *2000 Words* have been translated in Oxley *et. al.*, pp. 261-8.

49. Cf. Keane, p. 100. Jeremy Shapiro claims that the concept could be potentially institutionalized, "Reply to Miller" *Telos* 27 (1976), p. 175 but gives no indication of the concrete institutional changes which would be made.

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Kosik's analysis of this problem is closely related to his discussion of the "economic factor" in *Dialectics of the Concrete*. As before he questions the metaphysical asumptions underlying the thesis that the ensemble of social relations are alleged to constitute human nature. Whereas previously he left open the question of whether politics could be assimilated into his analysis of labor and praxis—"A sweeping negative answer would be just as incorrect as the assertion that science, politics, and art are indeed labor"[50]—here his analysis of political power suggests that the same interweaving of labor and recognition analysed in connection with the abstract notion of praxis seems also to hold for the specific case of political practice. Thus "power is in the position of altering human relations, within which man is able to move freely (and therefore able to raise himself to humanity), but it cannot take this movement from him. In other words: by means of power freedom can be enthroned, but each man must create autonomy for himself, alone and not through any intermediary representative."[51] Something akin to the moment of labor turns up here in the realization that political action is a creation of a space within which action then unfolds.[52] And the moment of recognition is reaffirmed here in the argument that no process of creating the prerequisites for political action ever succeeds in determining human action in the same way that technical manipulation determines the course of physical bodies.[53]

By granting that every political action contains an aspect of *fabrication*, and thus an element of decision or choice, it may seem that Kosik has opened himself up to charges that he has succumbed to a decisionistic conception of politics. While Kosik would not deny that much of what passes for political action in fact is marked by arbitrary or decisionistic elements, his stress on the two-fold nature of praxis does seem to provide him with a line of defense which he elaborates in his distinction between the political thinker and the political pragmatist. While the pragmatist does indeed attempt to reduce political action to instrumental decisionism, ignoring the moment of recognition by imposing his conception of politics on an unwitting reality, the political thinker is aware of the role which time and durable conventions play in the success of political action.[54] The "material" with which a political thinker works is different from that which faces an artist or scientist in that it constrains him with a different sort of time. While the actions of the artist or the scientist may be delayed until the prerequisites for a successful completion of the task are in order, the politician is forced to act within a common time frame and thus always risks becoming a slave to time. In each case he must respect the prevailing forms of political action and seek to realize the

50. Kosik, *D.C.*, p. 124.
51. *Nachrichten...*, p. 79, cf. *D.C.*, p. 147.
52. Cf. Arendt's discussion of the classical view that legislation is an "apolitical act;" being a process of poiesis (making) rather than praxis, *Human Condition*, section 27.
53. *Nachrichten...*, p. 80.
54. *Nachrichten...*, p. 62. Cf. also related comments from the same period by Lubos Dobrovsky and Dusan Hamsik in Oaxley, *et. al.*, pp. 84-5, 99.

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potentialities immanent within those forms.[55]

This stress on the artificiality of political and social conventions is perhaps inspired by some of the peculiarities of the so-called "Czech Question." As Milan Kundera noted in his speech to the congress of the Czechoslovak Writers Union, there is a peculiar "unobviousness" about the existence of the Czech nation, indeed even about the existence of Czech as a language. The decision to resurrect a "half-forgotten language" and then a generation later to resurrect a "half-moribund people" was "a deliberate act and, like every act involved a choice between the arguments *for* and *against*."[56] The decision to speak a language which would have none of the advantages of a widely read language such as German is more like an act of fabrication, the significance of which becomes clear only as the historical consequences of the act are unfolded, than either unreflective maintenance of a long standing set of conventions or the rational and discursive achievement of a consensus.

It is this ultimate artificiality and unobviousness that lies at the heart of Kosik's analysis of the crisis of socialism. If history is a multi-dimensional field which is not definable by a simple evolution of productive forces or of forms of interaction, then any meaning which it possess can only be the result of a partial totalization, which always risks missing what in fact are the important lessons this past has to teach. The radical dilemma facing socialism today is the growing possibility that it may lose its *raison d'etre* and "may cease to play the role of a *revolutionary and liberating* alternative..."[57] Emancipation, enlightenment, a socialism with more recognizably human features—these are all historically contingent projects and can claim no assurance that they rest on grounds more secure than the action of those individuals who try to sustain them.

Kosik's work thus presents us with a fundamental rethinking of the concept of praxis which attempts to free the concept from the reductionist tendencies of orthodox Marxism's affection for the logic of production. His philosophical revitalization of the concept is complemented by his political analysis of the Prague Spring, which, as we have seen, explores the role of temporality, conventions, and artifice in political life.

The Prague Spring is not a piece of radical memorabilia. The problems it posed live on in the continuing tension between oppressor and oppressed, indicated by the recent work of the Charter 77 association.[58] Kosik's central thesis that individuals cannot be controlled by power in the same way that the movement of a physical object can is being put to an appropriately Kafkaesque test by the present policy of "normalization." The results of the present struggle will tell us much about what tanks, purges, words and traditions can and cannot do.

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55. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3, again note the parallel to the concept of mimesis.
56. Milan Kundera's speech is also translated in Hamsik, pp. 167 ff.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5.
58. Cf. Karel Kovanda "Czechoslovakia in Transition" and the accompanying documents in *Telos* 31 (1977) pp. 143 ff. For an interesting general analysis of the post invation situation cf. Antonin J. Liehm, "Intellectuals and the New Social Contract" *Telos* 23 (1975) pp. 156 ff.

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THE DIALECTIC OF MORALITY AND THE MORALITY OF THE DIALECTIC*

by Karel Kosik

It is important to differentiate between those theories on the one hand, that in principle are in a position to come to grips with major questions but, for whatever reasons, have remained incomplete, and those, on the other, which are incapable of ever doing that because they are simply unable to do so. For instance, Plekhanov's theory of art has never come close to a systematic analysis of art and, subsequently, was not capable of determining the artistic qualities of single works of art. It got stuck (bogged down) within the description of social conditions and the economic 'equivalents.' The gap is an expression of its theoretical inadequacy and not of the complexity of the object of its analysis. And it seems all too probable that the Marxist discussion of morality falls into this grouping as well. Isn't it possible, in other words, that our shattering condemnation of moralism and ethical socialism—not to mention the suspicion of everything that has anything to do with morality—is an indirect admission of our theoretical inability to grasp definite realm of human behavior?

This question cannot simply be erased by a reference to the debates on Marxism and morality that occurred in the socialist movement at the turn of the century. This debate demonstrated that social action, to the extent that it becomes a tool of power politics, loses its authenticity. Social politics degenerates into social engineering, which is in turn based on the scientific mechanism of economic forces.

At the moment when history comes to be understood as the realm of strict causality and determinism—hence, at the moment when the products of human praxis overwhelms praxis itself—the question arises as to the possibility of human activity. The contradiction between the "law" of history and human activity erupts. Most of the familiar attempts to explain and to theoretically transcend this contradiction bear the mark of a mechanistic approach which assigns to human activity the function of an accelerator pedal or of a transmission belt in an inevitable historical process. But this does not solve the problem. Insofar as the historical process was analysed with the methods of a "social physics" ("economic materialism"), it was reduced to the level of a *natural phenomenon*. The question of the meaning of history and social praxis was thus relegated to the individual sphere. Furthermore, this mistake, was carried over into the criticism of this position itself—namely, that it never pushed through to the ground of the problem. Thus, the problematic became privatized and the fetishized interpretation of history had to be supplemented with ethics. It is not surprising, then, that under such

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conditions, morality appears in its relationship to Marxism as a foreign element (which causes certain problems for Marxist theory—for example, in the attempt to bind Kant to Marx) or at least as an external acessory. All of this serves to reinforce the secondary and marginal position of human beings in the naturalistic and scientistic concepts.

The ability or inability to define in a theoretically valid manner the problems of morality and art is directly related to a certain understanding of the dialectic, a certain theory of action, truth, etc. In other words, the way in which a philosophy conceives of history also determines its view on morality and human praxis. Thus, there exists a demonstrable correlation between a mechanistically understood dialectics, a pragmatic notion of truth and a utilitarian ethics. The reason for the failure of the numerous attempts to develop problems of morality on the basis of Marxism cannot merely be explained by pointing to their underestimation and neglect of ethical concerns. Rather, the philosophical grounds expressed through the various central concepts already impose limits that even the most profound study cannot hope to overcome unless it simultaneously surmounts the narrow analytical basis. Each investigation of a single aspect of reality is always simultaneously an examination of the fundamental principles that are indispensable for the realization of the partial analysis. If there is no dialectical reciprocity between the hypotheses and the validation of the results, if the analysis is based on hypotheses uncritically applied and if the outcome does not lead to a deepening or even to a revision of the general assumptions, then incongruity, blindness and the failure to understand reality necessarily result.

The theory of humanity is the basis for the development of the categories of morality. But this theory is only possible within the framework of a specific definition of the relation between the individual and society, between man and reality. This, in turn, requires the development of an appropriate model of the dialectic. By saying this I am not merely emphasizing the significance of the task, but I also want to point out the fact that today any attempt to define ethics and to ground specific concepts of it entails an evaluation of Marxism's findings. Only in this way can the theory attain a universality that does not allow any privileged position.

A fundamental virtue of philosphical thinking lies in its ability to fruitfully and critically apply the principles which it has itself developed. Whenever Marxism fails to live up to these principles, it betrays its own intentions and potentiality. Marxism has revealed the contradictions between speech and action, thought and reality, truth and utility, consciousness and effect—in short, between individual interests and social needs. Inasmuch as its critique joins together certain tendencies of European thought, it has described capitalist society as a dynamic system of contradictions, whose source is the exploitation of wage-labor and in the contradiction between labor and capital.

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After the disclosure of the contradictory nature of the system it remains to be asked how it is possible to solve *each and every one* of its contradictions, and whether or not the dissolution of the contradictions of the capitalist world would be simultaneously the dissolution of the essential contradictions of *human existence*. As yet no answer to this question has been found. The necessary premise for this seems to me to be the application of the materialist dialectic to the theory and praxis of Marxism itself. So long as this does not happen, Marxism will not be able to explain the tension between revolutionary millenarianism and revolutionary (or post-revolutionary) skepticism. The former claims that the revolution will transcend all contradictions of human reality, whereas the latter holds that the revolution could never transcend any of them. In addition, only through the application of their materialist dialectic to Marxism itself will Marxism be able to solve the cardinal problem that stumped Hegel: namely, the question regarding the *goal* or, in other words, the *meaning* of history.

The materialist dialectic was, for Marx, an instrument that served to critically reveal and depict the contradictions of capitalist society. To be sure, in investigating their own theory and praxis, Marxists today frequently substitute materialism with idealism, dialectics with metaphysics, and critique with apologetics. More than ever before, to be faithful to Marx means to return to consistent thinking and to the application of the materialist dialectic to *all* contemporary social phenomena, ultimately even to Marxism and socialism. Only in this way will one be able to explain how the inversion of positions and methods came about.

Next, it must be determined if contradictions between reason and reality, consciousness and consequence, morality and action, subject and object exist in societies where the antagonism between the working class and capital has been transcended. Would this mean that capitalism is merely one specific historical form of the contradictions that are found in all social formations? Or would it mean that socialism as a movement and as a social form is not sufficiently developed to enable a precise description of its effects on human interaction and on the governing of society?

For our purposes, it is enough to indicate that these contradictions and the unveiling throw new light on the relation between social reality and the individual. In what follows, we will show how this relation can be understood in light of changing conditions.

After having outlined thus far the theoretical point of departure for our reconsideration of Marxist ethics, let us proceed with a short review of the contradiction between the individual and society and between internality and externality.

Different systems generate different forms of human interactions. Diderot's fatalist Jacques and his master, Hegel's master and slave, Mandeville's vain lady and sly merchant are historical models of human interaction within which the relation among humans are determined by their standing in the

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social order. Each social system "produces"—and has as its prerequisite people whose rational or rationalized behavior (behavior, that is, which is directed toward results) guarantees the maintenance of the system. This "reduction" of man to specific properties is not the result of theory, but of historical reality itself. Thus, for example, the economy is a system of relations that, as soon as the individual actively enters into it, transforms him into a *homo oeconomicus* independently of his will and consciousness. Man is only *active* within the economy insofar as the *economy itself* is active. The economy emphasizes a few of his qualities and abilities while underplaying others that are useless to its functioning.

On the one hand, the social system—understood as a socio-economic formation, the economy and public life—is maintained through the social activity of the individual but, on the other hand, it itself determines the character and the possibilities of the individual. This can give rise to the illusion that the system's functioning is completely independent of the individual whose concrete behavior in turn, has nothing to do with the system's development. But in fact, this is only an illusion. It is not possible either to reduce the individual to his role in a specific system or to view his existence apart from such roles and systems. The problem of human freedom —hence, of morality—is the problem of individual's relation *to* the system.

The materialist critique, then, is concerned with the distinction between what the individual in this or that system *can* do, *must* do and really *does*, on the one hand, and, on the other, the actions or interpretations there of actions that are prescribed by the moral code. In this sense it is completely correct to say that modern society is anchored in the economy, provided that the economy is not understood in a vulgar way as an "economic factor," but as an historical system for the production and reproduction of social wealth. While the current moral code would have us believe that man is naturally good and that human relations are based on mutual trust, the real behavior of individuals, rooted as it is in this or that economic system, and is based on mutual distrust. It is this contradiction between morality and economy that Marx had in mind when he searched for the roots of human reification in capitalist society: "it stems from the very nature of estrangement that each sphere applies to me a different and opposite yardstick—ethics one and political economy another—for each is a specific estrangement of man and focuses attention on a particular field of estranged relation to the other."[1]

Conflicts are thus inevitable in situations where the requirements of morality differ from the requirements imposed by the economy. While the former demands that the individual be good and that he treat others as he would himself be treated, the latter forces him to see others as nothing but competition and potential enemies in the struggle for economic benefits.

Each of these conflicts puts man in a different light: sometimes as hypocrite, at other times as idealist, sometimes as egoist, at other times as

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, (New York, 1975), p. 310.

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philanthropist, etc.

Why are people unhappy in the modern world? Because they are slaves of self-love, according to Rousseau, or because they are vain, according to Stendhal. But how does Marxism, which views history as the humanization of the world, answer this question? Will it put the blame for all unhappiness on material wants? Vulgar materialism, of course, works with such arguements. It has not recognized the significance and the capacity of *praxis* and searches in vain for the authentic mediation between economy and morality. But why, then, are people unhappy in modern society? The question marks a contradiction between truth and unhappiness, whoever sees truth and sees the reality for what it is cannot be happy, and whoever is happy in the modern world does not know truth and sees reality through the prism of conventions and lies. This contradiction has to be resolved through *revolutionary praxis.*

The reproaches of "vanity" and "self-love" from Stendahl and Rousseau hit the mechanism of human behavior where it is most vulnerable—namely, man's insatiability, which transforms things and values into mere transitory goals or temporary dispositions. Each concern is just a simple impulse or a pretext *leading on* to the next one. In any case, whatever might appear as motivation in the realm of behavior and action is regarded in the objective realm as the mere expression of the "lawfulness of things." The striving for profits, which appears to the capitalist as the motive for his activity, is thus the internalization of the process which capital unleashes.

Why are men unhappy in the modern world? Rousseau and Stendhal reacted with psychological categories, while Marx answered with a description of a system wherein vanity, self-love, the quest for metaphysics (Girard), resentment (Scheler), unrest and emptiness, the transformation of the highest values into an phantasm and its elevation in turn to the level of the highest value, all result from the internalization of the economic structure. In the transformation of all values into simple transitory moments in the general and absolute striving for other values, the idea of happiness degenerates into the desire for comfort and the idea of reason degenerates into the rational manipulation of things and people. The goal is exchanged for the means and the means for the goals. The economic structure that is expressed in the formula Money—Commodity—Money becomes internalized. As modern society comes to be defined as: "Comparison in place of real community,"[2] it becomes the task of historical *praxis* to change the structure of society in a manner which would warrant its definition as "a real community in place of comparison."

Within everydayness truth lies beside falsehood and the good beside evil. But in order for morality to develop, the good must be differentiated from the evil so that they can oppose each other. The individual makes this differentiation whenever he acts, and he acts ethically whenever his activity remains faithful to such a differentiaton. The dimension of life which men

2. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, (London, 1973), p. 161.

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carry out their work and in which they undertake public or private tasks regardless of their ethical value, is expressed in the categories of diligence, obedience, eagerness to work, etc. Only those who suppress this are then surprised when "diligent" and "decent" people, loved by their families and respected in their professions and by their peers, turn into criminals as soon as they leave this sphere and act outside of it.

Moral behavior consists in the differentiation between the good and the evil. But such behavior already presupposes an awareness of good and evil. Does one arrive at this, however, only through action and behavior? Does morality perhaps begin with intention and conscience, or is it to be found only in the results of behavior, its accomplishments and consequences?

The "beautiful soul" fears the possible aftermath of its actions and wants to avoid it by withdrawing. Its behavior represents the movement of its conscience. This conscience knows itself to be virtuous; it has never hurt anyone. Therefore, the "beautiful soul" judges everything outside itself against its own constitutive criteria. It looks at the world through the eyes of good conscience. Indeed, the "beautiful soul" hasn't committed any evil because it hasn't done anything. And precisely because of this, it endures evil. Its attitude of pure conscience is the passive observation of evil.

The "commissar" is the polar opposite of the "beautiful soul." He accuses the good conscience of being hypocritical, knowing that each act is subject to laws that transform necessity into accident and vice versa. The "commissar" is to act and to suppress evil. But though he wants to change the world in which evil exists, he does not change himself. In doing so he actively affirms himself in the mistaken idea that his activity will be more successful the more passive the object of his attempts at transformation and education. His activity provokes passivity among those to whom it is addressed, which then in turn justifies his activity and becomes the condition of his existence. The "commissar's" intended reforms thus change into deformed praxis. (At times the "commissar's" activity seems to be reminiscent of a revolutionary's. Insofar as there is a real connection here, however, it expresses the development that transforms the revolutionary into a bureaucrat).

The antinomy between the "beautiful soul" and the "commissar" indicates the contradiction between moralism and utilitarianism. The "voice of conscience" is decisive for moralism, while the "judgment of history" is paramount for utilitarian realism. Given their mutual isolation, both instances become problematic. How can I know that the voice of my conscience is not in error and how can I, within the framework of my conscience, prove its authenticity? Am I at all in the position to decide whether or not this voice is really my voice and not rather an alien voice that speaks in my name and uses my conscience as its instrument?

On the other hand, is not the "judgment of history" just as questionable a notion as the "voice of conscience?" The judgment of history always occurs *post festum*. Although the tribunal of history can condemn deeds, it is

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powerless to make amends for injustices. Nor is the judgment of history ever final. Each historical period has its own tribunal whose verdict is revised in the following periods. The judgment of history has neither the authority of "last judgment" nor the irrevocable character assigned to it by Christian theology. The elements of the "last judgment" and God give to Christian morality its absolute character and defend it against relativization. But as soon as the theological notion of the "last judgment" is transsubstantiated into the idea of finite history—which was later to be denounced as a capitulation before theology—and as soon as one takes God to be dead, the structure supporting absolute moral consciousness falls apart. In Christianity, God plays the role of an absolute mediator in man's relation to other men. God is a mediator who makes the other into a fellow man. Does the disappearance of God imply, then, the end of mediated interactions among men and the foundation of unmediated relationships among them? If God is dead and men are allowed to do anything, does this mean that relations among men would be based on unmediated contact in a realm where their real nature appears and becomes realized? It seems clear that so long as there is no materialist interpretation of the sentence, "God is dead" nor of the history of this death, we will remain the victims of vulgar misunderstanding and idealist mystification. God is the metaphysical mediator among men, but his removal obviously does not necessarily destroy mediation or metaphysics. Metaphysical mediation can be replaced easily by physical mediation, which assumes metaphysical qualities—regardless whether this mediation occurs through brute force (terror), power in a form disguised by mediation (state), or through society as reified reality.

The Christian notion of God and "last judgment" bestowed on every action an ultimate and unequivocal character. Given the existence of an absolute judgment, one fought ultimately and unequivocally on the side of good or evil. Such a differentiation placed the actor in an immediate relationship to the "last judgment." With the destruction of this idea, reality becomes ambiguous and multidimensional. History no longer guarantees the victory of the good and the true. Reason refuses to justify such convictions, and is replaced by faith. But since belief in God has collapsed, the void left behind is rapidly filled by a substitute: the future. Belief in the future is the modern metaphysical illusion; *the future itself becomes reified.* The dialectic unveiled the contradictions of modern reality and depicted a gigantic system of antinomies and antagonisms, but today, not having the means to resolve the contradictions, it appears to expect salvation in the future. For the dialectic, the future will render a verdict confirming the victory of good over evil: in other words, such a victory will be achieved with the aid of the judgment of the future. And the less a given epoch is able to solve its own problems and contradictions, the more it seems to entrust the future with the solution of those problems. But such faith in the future makes the present only provisional, the simple function of a not yet actualized fact. The future,

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considered as a mythological decree of truth and the good and with its guarantee of a refuge from the menace of skepticism, itself ends up as skepticism. Relationships among men become absolutely irrelevant in a world where values have evaporated or exist only as unrealizable ideals. In such a world, moral prescriptions congeal into hypocrisy and deception insofar as the individual has forfeited the opportunity to realize by his actions the good and the just.

The dialectic can justify morality only if it is itself moral. The morality of the dialectic is implied in its character as a *continuum*. It is important to emphasize here three fundamental aspects of the dialectic as a destructive and a totalizing process.

1. The dialectic is the destruction of pseudo-concreteness. It resolves all reified forms of material and spiritual reality by revealing them to be historical forms of human *praxis*.

2. The dialectic unveils contradictions. It is in other words, an activity which emphasizes these contradictions instead of supressing them.

3. The dialectic expresses the movement of *human praxis*. The materialist dialectic postulates the unity of the content of social classes and the content of humanity. Any attempt to isolate the characteristics of class and class structure leads towards sectarianism and the bureaucratic deformation of socialism: conversely, any attempt to isolate general characteristics and structures ends up in opportunism and the reformist deformation of socialism. In the first case a brutal moralism arises, and in the second, a powerless moralism. The former leads to a bureaucratic disfiguration of reality, while the latter results in capitulation in the face of a distorted reality. (The difference here, of course, is between the conscious understanding of the dialectical unity of humans belonging to social classes and humankind per se, on the one hand, and, on the other, the historical realization of this unity. In the first case we are faced with a theoretical effort while in the second, an historical process is involved.

Inasmuch as the dialectic does not condemn contradictions to then turn around and capitulate to them, and inasmuch as it is not a false totalization that is content to let the future take care of resolving its own contradictions, the central question of the dialectic concerns the connection between revealing contradictions and transcending them. It is a question that ultimately concerns the relation between theory and praxis. Once again, we return to the problem of morality, understood by Marxism as the problem of overcoming *reified* and *fetishized* praxis. The morality of the dialectic is *revolutionary praxis*.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

INTRODUCTION TO "LA NOUVELLE PHILOSOPHIE"

by Michel Rybalka

In a recent interview, Michel Foucault states that philosophy these days has to become journalistic. The "nouvelle philosophie" movement is less than two years old and, while it is scant in its theoretical output and limited in its views, it has week after week filled the screens of French television and the pages of *Le Monde, Le Nouvel Observateur*, and other French periodicals. Even on this side of the Atlantic, it has been seized by the mass media and has generated an unusual amount of articles and editorials (for example, in *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, etc.).

This sudden popularity has to be understood both in a political and a philosophical context. On one hand, "la nouvelle philosophie" is a sequel to the May 1968 events and to the days of *La Cause du peuple*; it is a reaction against the overtheorization, abstraction, and technicity of structuralism, and it represents, with its libertarian tendencies, a decisive break with Marxism. As Glucksmann points out, the movement marks a return to philosophy, almost in the eighteenth-century sense of the word, and it shows the willingness by a new generation of philosophers to rethink the left in non-Marxist terms, with an emphasis on human rights. For Glucksmann and his friends, the Gulag and its millions of victims can no longer be pushed under the rug and must be explained; the culprit is not only Stalin, but also Marx himself; the Soviet model is completely discredited and the heroes of our time are no longer the Marxist revolutionaries, but the Ukrainian, Russian and Eastern-bloc intellectual dissidents.

On the other hand, this rediscovery of the Gulag, this new emphasis on what the French call now "les libertés," and the attacks against bureaucracy come at a time when French life in all its aspects is overwhelmingly dominated by the perspective of the 1968 elections, which may bring the Socialist-Communist alliance into power. In the fierce political battle going on at present, the position of the new philosophers is indeed an ambiguous one. Their critique of power may well serve the Right, and many arguments end in the question: "On which side are you and for whom will you vote?"

As hinted above, the main propounder of "la nouvelle philosophie" is André Glucksmann, a former Communist and Maoist, who may have been the originator of the movement with his *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes* (1975), a scathing indictment of the Soviet system and of its Western defenders, and whose recent book, *Les Maîtres penseurs,* has been very influential. The term "nouvelle philosophie" has been popularized by Bernard-Henri Lévy, who is in charge of the philosophy department at the Editions Grasset and who has managed to publish the main titles relevant to the new movement while issuing a volume of his own, *La Barbarie à visage humain*.

Closely connected with the movement are young philosophers like Jean-Marie Benoist (author of *Marx est mort* and *La Tyrannie du logos*), Jean-Paul Dollé (*Le Désir de révolution*), and a group of former Maoists revolving around Maurice Clavel and who, with Christian Jambet and Guy Lardreau in *L'Ange*, propose a curious form of populist mysticism.

Not connected with the movement but related to it in some of its implications are the two old warriors of center-left politics, favoring openly the present regime,

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Raymond Aron with his *Plaidoyer pour une Europe défunte*, and Jean-François Revel, whose poorly written and indigent *La Tentation totalitaire* has nevertheless been a commercial success.

Sartre and Michel Foucault[1] have not intervened so far, but can be considered as sympathizers. Sartre has recently proclaimed his break with Marxism and has consistently advocated a philosophy of freedom, despite some mistakes and errors. One will find, among the texts translated below, two opposite views concerning him. It is regrettable that Castoriadis's basic dislike of Sartre leads him into a polemic which is too contrived to serve anyone.

Reaction against the new philosophers has been immediate, and there is already a book by François Aubral and Xavier Delcourt entitled *Contre la nouvelle philosophie*. For critics favoring the Union of the Left or belonging to the Communist Party, "la nouvelle philosophie" is a political operation devised to prevent the Socialist-Communist alliance from winning the 1978 elections. For philosophers of the previous generation, such as Deleuze, Castoriadis, Rancière, it is a journalistic operation conducted by a "pub-intelligentsia" and characterized by its theoretical weakness and by its hunger for intellectual power.

It is too early to tell how "la nouvelle philosophie" will resolve its ambiguities and how it will influence the course of French politics. It is certain, however, that it has stirred up a meaningful politico-philosophical debate and that the issue of human rights will remain in the forefront of our preoccupations. And, if the Left comes to power, one can be assured that there will not be any wholesale sacrifice of the intellect.

The texts translated below should give the reader a preliminary idea of "la nouvelle philosophie" and of the reaction it has provoked. *Telos* will publish other relevant statements as they appear.

1. Foucault, of course, has written a very favorable review of Glucksmann's book, *The Master Thinkers*, in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, May 9, 1977.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDRE GLUCKSMANN*

MAX GALLO: André Glucksmann, you were a Communist, then a Maoist. Today you are carried along by the wave of "new philosophers." You are immersed in intellectual and political debates. The day following your televized forum, devoted to Eastern dissidents, a Communist journalist, Laurent Salini, worte in *l'Hunamité*, "The new philosophers—neither new nor philosophers—are the last of the fire-brands hurled at the left. Pechiney's statements, Bernard-Henri Lévy's books, Glucksmann, it all amounts to the same thing!' What do you think?

ANDRÉ GLUCKSMANN: My parents were Jewish emigrants. They came from Nazi Germany to France in 1936. I was born in 1937. I learned to speak by swapping my legal name for a false one. Around me, the "greats" were in the Resistance—and often disappeared. My mother survived. The concentration camps? I spent two years in Jewish boarding-schools with children who had just returned from concentration camps. I grew up amidst political debates. It does not bother me in the least to find myself immersed in them once again.

*Translated from *L'Express*, July 18-24, 1977, by Dorothy Gehrke.

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GALLO: What is your opinion of *l'Humanité*'s Stalinist attack against both Pechiney's statements and your book?

GLUCKSMANN: To be surprised by *l'Humanité* is to have read nothing. It's a wax museum; and even more disquieting, this type of caricature is no longer solely characteristic of *l'Humanité*. When I recalled that Mitterrand, when he was Minister of the Interior, inaugurated the Algerian War with the theme "with rebels, there is but one way to negotiate—war," when I noted that socialists scorn struggles for human rights in the "socialist" empire as fiercely as previously they combatted anti-colonial struggles in the western empires, I became, for Attali, "the new right." I believe he was sincere.

GALLO: How can one intellectual's simplification of another's position be explained? As a consequence of commitment to a party, or to political struggle?

GLUCKSMANN: I had a televised discussion with Attali. He explained that intellectuals ought to remain in a desert convoy and not bark at the outside world. However, each time that the intellectuals, fascinated by power, have sung inside the convoy, always very civilly, but ultimately in order to participate in the exercise of power and to thereby assume responsibility for the lies by which power asserts itself, it has been a disaster—in the East as well as the West. Attali, a good example, is not a Marxist but here begins to function in Marxist fashion. To the leadership of the convoy, made up of experts and guides who imagine themselves to be the locomotive of world History, he who voices any doubts about science and the program of this leadership is labelled a traitor. When the "apparatchiks" enter into delirium, they "Marxify" and exclude.

GALLO: Isn't the situation changing? At the time of the Popular Front (*Front populaire*) the "great intellectuals" were "engaged." Why, in your opinion, are they today on their guard?

GLUCKSMANN: This fact calls for a double explanation. On the one hand, there certainly exists, on the part of a significant number of intellectuals, a rather profound disdain for the *Programme commun* and the final solutions it purports to offer. As the opinions polls demonstrate, this attitude echoes a generalized sentiment. One thinks: "It is imperative that things change and that those in the process of leaving get out." At the same time it is thought: "That will change nothing; unemployment will decrease minimally and socialists and Communists will not come to a mutual understanding." This is the majority opinion, according to the opinion polls. People vote for the *Programme commun*, but they think that there is in fact no program (e.g., against unemployment) and moreover that it is not held in "common." Not only are the great intellectuals absent, but so is the fervor, enthusiasm and *naiveté* of the *Front populaire* era.

On the other hand, for more than ten years the work of intellectuals has been gaining in precision what it is losing in pretentiousness. The "magi intellectuals" who bear general and final solutions for the people seem to be disappearing. There emerges another, more modest, manner of being intellectual. They direct their activity toward precise problems; for example, they attract attention to colonial crimes, life in prisons, drugs, nuclear power, and Larzac. This is no longer the era of great syntheses but of detailed analyses. I prefer them. If only the magi parties and imaginary programs would likewise disappear! Two centuries is long enough!

GALLO: What about "new philosophers," "new philosophy" and the books being discussed?

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GLUCKSMANN: Apparently the expression "new philosophy" was invented by Bernard-Henri Lévy two years ago to introduce a group of writers he was publishing in the collection he edited. It was the act of an editor. I was not among them; I still am not. Therefore it does not particularly concern me.

The second stage was marked by the publication of Bernard-Henri's, *La Barbarie à visage humain* (*Barbarism with a Human Face*), just after the publication of my own book. We appeared on the television program "Apostrophes." There I repeated: "There are no new philosophers, at least I know of none, and as for myself, I have never been one." Is this clear? The very next day the combined polemics was begun by those who did not seem to have taken the trouble to listen... Reading the books in question, it is useless: the "new philosophy" is refuted as a whole. Who is constructing a "new philosophy?" Those who criticize it!

Stage three: traditional guardrails are giving way. For example, the philosophical lectures organized at the Centre Beaubourg attracted more people than do political meetings—very interesting! An entire generation—that of '68—has retained the capacity to be amazed. It has known activism; now it is reflecting. This attempt to think by means of one's own capacities, outside schools and organizations, seems to be less a question of age than of the era: the announcement of the New Man no longer works as a recipe nor does it break History in two. Before my time, it was the Old Regime; during my time, absolute freedom. The two-century-old iron gate of the Revolution—political or sexual—has been returned to the museum. Some recent books seem to echo this general, massive need, perhaps my own and certainly that of others such as Michel Foucault's *La Volenté de savoir* (*The Will to Know*), which has an enormous circulation. An increasing number of people thus wish to use their own heads; this is not "new philosophy" but philosophy renewed, the ability to open one's eyes and be amazed—the refusal to allow oneself to be swept along on the rails of pre-constructed thought, the century-and-a-half-old by-product of an illustrious bearded man.

GALLO: This refusal by an entire generation to allow iself to be railroaded, a political refusal in the traditional sense of the word, and this absence of the great intellectuals from the electoral stage—doesn't this cause anxiety to politicians?

GLUCKSMANN: Of course. And they are reacting. For example, in order to mask the intellectuals' absence, they let it be understood that the intellectual is insane, restless, irresponsible, and ready for the asylum. But the most classic method is to drive them crazy. And the intellectual, like anyone, easily allows himself to be driven mad. The history of Russia is likewise that of intellectuals who publically execute themselves with insults or with articles, dipped in ink to be sure, but in an ink that tends toward blood red. Then the police intervene and collect the "ideological corpses." Nadja Mandelstam recounts how this happens in her memoirs, *Contre tout espoir* (*Against all Hope*).

GALLO: In France, at this moment, can you discern signs of such a disturbance, particularly among the "new philosophers?"

GLUCKSMANN: I am aware of a few. For example, it has been decreed that the "new philosophers" are a group opposed to the "old philosophers." Thus, half the intellectuals—the "old" ones—take off for the garbage cans of History. It will be asserted with a reference to Sartre that one must be engaged... but Sartre, who would just shrug his shoulders, is no longer even asked for his opinion. Neither Foucault, nor Lacan, nor Sartre, Clavel, Deleuze, Guattari, nor Levi-Strauss nor many others toss us flowers. The left is ours—we who have mobilized the great names: Hugo!Gide!pre-war

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Malraux! I tell you that they are too old to populate our stages. There remain the young. It is undeniable that they are young; therefore, they are not philosophers but part of the right. The game is up. There are the old ones and the young of the right. Thus, it is not surprising that there is no one on stage.

In my opinion, this operation can only function if intellectuals allow themselves to be imprisoned in a world especially fabricated for them, that is, if they settle their accounts solely among themselves. But it won't work if they remain attached to a piece of reality.

GALLO: To the readers of your previous book, *La Cuisinière et la mangeur d"hommes*, and to the television viewers of your June 27th open forum where you spoke with a Russian, a Czech and a Pole, you are "attached to a piece of reality," namely Gulag and dissidence. At times you are accused of this, naturally in the context of the French situation.

GLUCKSMANN: It is said that Glucksmann wrote a book on the French situation, and that he claims, "The left is or will be the Gulag." The texts indicate that I have never said this, but the leftist parties have a tendency to understand me in this manner. If the shoe fits, wear it. I have done worse than to say: left, therefore Gulag. I have not been so hypocritical as to exclude this possibility *a priori*. I have not hypothetically guaranteed the left against all risks of a Gulag. I did not say, from the outset, that the Gulag is the backwardness of the Moujik (Elleinstein), a specifically "Asiatic" phenomenon (Attali), or a consequence of an error in reading Marx (Althusser).

By sheer force of the desire for clean hands, the left has an empty mind. It cannot succeed in reflecting upon what really happened in Russia, in China, and finally in all revolutions which appealed to socialism and Marxism. This incapacity to reflect upon the Gulag, along with the rejection of Solzhenitsyn, who has been neither read nor commentated, is disturbing. It is this blindness that I questioned.

When I criticize, in *Les Maîtres penseurs,* German philosophers—Fichte, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche—I do not say: "Hegel is read and a concentration camp is created; Marx is read and another concentration camp is created." In *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes*, I have shown that Marxism was necessary to make concentration camps, as Nazism needed Buchenwald or Auschwitz. No one has ever thought that Nazism was foreign to Nazi concentration camps! I reproach Marx with having traced a certain number of intellectual routes: the cult of the total and final Revolution, of the State that terrorizes for the good of the collectivity, and of Social Science that permits the masses to be guided in spite of themselves. These paths do not lead directly to the Gulag but to non-resistance to the Gulag. The master thinkers lay down their guns in the face of the first upsurge of a terrorism which appeals precisely to the Revolution, Science and the State.

GALLO: Regarding the Gulag, you have a sentence in *La Cuisinière* that must have surprised many people; I find the same idea again in *Les Maîtres penseurs*. You write, "The Gulag Archipelago is the most advanced point of the West; the gesture which imprisons in the Archipelago is classic. Moscow, the capital of oriental despotism? Nonsense; it is the pinnacle of western despotism." Is this statement not paradoxical—or Maoist?

GLUCKSMANN: In order to understand it, it is necessary to return to Solzhenitsyn. I share Le Roy Ladurie's opinion: Solzhenitsyn is the best historian of contemporary Russia. He says that Macbeth is a criminal who kills seven victims. Multiplication is necessary in order to execute six million and then sixty; the multiplier is ideology and,

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in Russia, it was Marxist ideology. This ideology functioned so as to radicalize a tendency that had already existed in Russia prior to the revolution: forced westernization. One can go back even further to Peter the Great's reform projects, to the fortified villages he created—the first "camps" on the steps of the Russian Empire.

GALLO: I am not convinced. Behind your statement, is there not an accusation of Europe, and, I repeat, a heritage of Maoist engagement? Finally, "the strategies of domination" of which you speak are far from being exclusively European or western. The Inca civilization was, in 1530, before any contact with Europe, an implacable bureaucracy. Thus, I am led to hypothesize that there exists a social logic which does not originate from European sources, but which yet leads to forms of domination, absolute power and bureaucracy.

BLUCKSMANN: Absolutely. I agree about the Incas. The ethnologist Pierre Clastres demonstrates that so-called "primitive societies" already were on guard against the dangers of the State.

GALLO: Europe can then be exonerated?

GLUCKSMANN: Guilt tends to get in the way of thinking clearly. Thus Europe is exonerated, but not by your reasoning. The European form of domination and despotism is very different from that of the Incas. It establishes despotism in the name of freedom. This is the famous sentence of Dostoyevsky's Chiliagov: "I was searching for absolute freedom, and I arrived at absolute despotism." Despotism in the name of freedom in Europe's trademark. Europe does not reduce to this; it is at the same time Socrates' Greece. Read Maurice Clavel's excellent analysis of Socrates as a philosopher and marketplace agitator in his book *Nous l'avons tous tué* (*We All Killed Him*). Experts claim that Socrates anticipates the totalitarianism of the master thinkers. I also cite Panurge, that Renaissance pelbeian whom Rabelais sent out as an antidote to all of Thélème's fanaticisms and to the scientific, programmed, socialist and ridiculous kingdom. There exists an entire Europe of freedom that forces the other Europe to refine its despotism.

GALLO: How can the existence of this Europe of freedom be explained? You have cited Socrates and Panurge as incarnations of this freedom. In *Les Maîtres penseurs,* you demonstrate that the Jew is another face of this freedom and, in this capacity, a target.

GLUCKSMANN: The history of freedom is an enormous task. I limit myself to the scrutiny of the great totalitarian machines conceived for pulverizing these freedoms. They even assign a place to the person who puts them out of working order—the Jew. For the German philosophers, the Jew is he who stands a chance of being dissident. It is interesting to reconstruct the hollow portrait of this freedom that disturbs them. First, it escapes the state. The Jew is a vagabond, as is the Hungarian gypsy. They will meet in the concentration camps. Next, the Jew is someone who speaks another tongue: thus he dodges the centralized bureaucracies. There the Jew meets the Occitain [Southerner (from Southwestern France)] and the Breton, or at least what one wishes to repress in the Occitain and the Breton when one is Jacobin, French, cultivated and Parisian. Finally, there is money, that is, an economic circulation that escapes state authority. People are constantly repeating: "Only one solution—nationalization." It is assumed that public monopoly is, by nature, superior to private monopoly, the civil servant superior to the grocer. The monopoly itself is not criticized, but rather what is criticized is what escapes the monolithic State. It is the Jewish side of the "private" that is the target, rather than the privileged side of exploitation. In what respect have "national" property and state exploitation been the

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source of people's happiness? In the eyes of the master thinkers, who may themselves be Jewish, private life, i.e., that into which the State has not yet stuck its nose, is condemned as "Jewish."

GALLO: Therefore anti-semitism in Poland or the USSR seems to you to derive less from these countries' national traditions than from the role of the State and its totalitarian philosophy?

GLUCKSMANN: Yes. Anti-semitism, xenophobia or fanaticism did not await the modern State in order to manifest themselves, but the totalitarian State brought them to incandescence by cultivating them on an industrial and planetary scale. Stalin ended up imitating Hitler.

GALLO: But Stalin is dead and rejected. Is this not all in the past? Certain people accuse you of looking backwards or beyond our borders, of neglecting, if not masking, our problems.

GLUCKSMANN: I am surprised. Brezhnev is the worthy son of Stalin, and thought does not stop at borders. If one examines a long tradition of French intellect, one notices that those who stuck their heads outside the borders were in general those whose thinking was most original: e.g., Gide returning from the Congo or the USSR, or Sartre showing that the Algerian's gaze teaches much about the hexagon of France.

Television viewers asked Solzhenitsyn why he was speaking to us about camps and sixty million dead, whether he realized he would trouble our elections, and whether he had done it on purpose. This is even more terrifying than scandalous! There are elections in France every two or three years. If each time a person spoke of what is happening in the world he ran the risk of troubling them, either one would no longer speak or one would cause trouble. So much the better!Awaken the sense of complexity in our heads!Furthermore, the miseries of the world are sometimes of French origin. For example, the Red Khmer leaders who are responsible for one or two million dead were often educated in Paris.

GALLO: A provocative question: Did the Red Khmers learn their Marxism in the book published in 1968 by one particular Maoist, André Glucksmann—*Stratégie et révolution en France*? I ask you this so as to pose the problem of the responsibility of the intellectual.

GLUCKSMANN: The Khmer leaders had completed their studies before 1968, perhaps unfortunately. I grant you that a French Maoist would have been capable of worse, which is precisely what leads me from the critique of Soviet Marxism to the rejection of variants, mine as well as others'. The Marxisms reigning in Paris have influenced a certain number of revolutionaries throughout the world, and I do not see at all what should exempt me from contemplating what they are doing so as to draw out lessons about our Marxism. When America "threw away" napalm on Vietnam, I drew a certain number of lessons concerning the Pentagon's doctrines. When one kills a number equivalent to, or perhaps even double, those dead in Cambodia by submachine-gun fire in the name of the Revolution, is it not fitting to judge the tree by its fruit and our Parisian "science" by its effects in Cambodia and elsewhere?

GALLO: What can resistance to totalitarianism—for instance, that of the Russian dissidents—teach us here in France?

GLUCKSMANN: A different way of thinking. Too often we have resisted by imitating that which we resist—a large organization is exchanged for a large organization, a State for a State, secret police for secret police. To be a dissident is to resist even the temptation of imitating. Some of Stalin's victims, like Bukharin, were split: they were the accused but at the same time, they were Communists as was their prosecutor. In

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spite of injections, Bukovsky doesn't allow himself to be divided in that way, he remains whole. He told me, "It is necessary to think forcefully: I am my class, my family, my nation, my humanity." Bukovsky dissects and asks: "Which is crazy, the official world or myself?"—*or myself*, neither the party nor the body of dissidents. Each individual decides and resists alone. Later, resistances answer one another like fires on the plain. No resistance organization resists behind the others' backs while manipulating them.

This teaches us reciprocally or inversely where we erred, either on the left or the right. We have delegated the care of thought, resistance, reflection and hope to a class, a State, and a party. Too often in France the man on the street jumps on a bandwagon; that is to say, he places his destiny in the hands of large organizations. Such was already the case during World War I. One relied on the State and the Army. Anti-colonialism in the West was never the accomplishment of responsible organizations. Isolated consciences take it upon themselves to protest, followed by small groups and networks. Finally the masses protest, as, for example, in the United States. Still there is no "party" to mobilize them. The same applies to anti-fascism: for an entire century, our large communist, socialist and worker organizations have not known how to resist fascism. Mussolini and Hitler triumphed in the two countries of Europe that had aligned the strongest unions and parties of the Marxist left. Pétain was legalized by a *Front populaire* chamber of deputies. When a Communist Party has taken power, it has never known how to master the fascism to which it gives birth. Thus, the concentration system covers two thirds of the planet. People resist by relying on their own forces; these forces do not belong to any sort of organization, nor to any ideology.

GALLO: Doesn't this exaltation of individual resistance mask the essential role of collective resistance? Since 1922, books denouncing the system of camps in the USSR have been appearing. Who reads them? Who knows of Victor Serge, the dissident writer exiled from Russia in the 1930s? Solzhenitsyn, however, is heard. Is it not correct that in the meantime the collective work of history has intervened—the Berlin revolt in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Poland, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia? The cup runs over, and then Solzhenitsyn is heard.

GLUCKSMANN: Indeed, it's running over. After the European houses of the dead, colonial wars and camps, perhaps in the depths of the population, individuals are fed up with final solutions. However, there will always be friendly experts who advise us to drink in order to forget, but not to forget to drink, and to begin again at zero by forming a new caravan of drunks. But is the collectivity opposed to the individual?

GALLO: No, I said that one depends on the other.

GLUCKSMANN: In effect, the collective aspect of resistance is bound to an entire series of traditions and to a culture that state terrorism has not succeeded in demolishing. In Marxist countries, a situation existing in colonized countries struggling for their independence is repeated. Women of Algiers demonstrated against the French with their cries. The Poles express dissent with their intellectual freedom and religious fervor, as do the Czechs, thanks to the unfathomable collective spirit of the worthy soldier, Svejk. Read Kundera. In the USSR, a Ukranian, Valentino Moroz, was condemned to 14 years in a camp. Several times he went on hunger strikes and was fed through tubes forced down his esophagus into which boiling soup was poured. He explains that it is necessary to regain strength from within the strength of a popular culture, whether it be a church, a cross (in certain regions of the Ukraine, the state pays 25 rubles to anyone who destroys a cross), or the Ukrainian tradition of egg

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painting.

In short, strength lies in all that resists state acculturation: a smile, perhaps thoughts, perhaps songs. Let us say that this is the black market of free circulation of men and ideas on the white market of official thought. The Russian opposition of yesteryear—Trotsky, and even Victor Serge—often remained part of the apparatus and continued to think like "professional revolutionaries." But today, the dissidents are individuals trading in the black market of contestation.

GALLO: Precisely. Do these dissidents, these black markets, evolve? Isn't there, on the one hand, an increase of totalitarian bureaucracies—for example, in the former colonies—a diffusion of the Gulag, while on the other hand, at the same time and everywhere, there is the resistance, the demand for the right to be different, for the right to be free? Perhaps this is the old debate between optimism and pessimism.

GLUCKSMANN: Between optimism and pessimism? To claim to know what the future holds for us is God's business, not mine. What we have to begin to realize is that society is not nor should it be a clean slate, of which Mao spoke. That this slate is already written upon, that people have relations, traditions and customs, curbs the omnipotence of the few. Difference is no longer considered a sin. There are homosexuals and there are monks; these are not necessarily perverts.

GALLO: As for yourself, you were first a Communist and then a Maoist. What rules of conduct did you glean from these commitments? What teachings do you retain from your ideological and political experiences?

GLUCKSMANN: Upon leaving the Communist Party at the age of 19, at the time of the Hungarian Revolution and at the moment when the Communist Party in effect supported colonial politics in Algeria, I had to learn to think with my own powers and to dispense with an organization.

The second moment was 1968. Until that time, I more or less imagined that theoretical reflection would bring bread and good thoughts to humanity. May '68 taught me otherwise—to open my eyes and ears to what was happening in the street—not in the sense that the revolution is made there, but that it is there that communication can operate without masters and without walls. There communication is direct, mutual, boundless and indomitable. The intellectual does not have a privileged status from the viewpoint of thought. He certainly has a privilege from the viewpoint of the expression of his thoughts and the ease with which he can communicate. However, one doesn't think better just because one has a formal education. There is no theoretical privilege, as the intellectual *Tout-Paris* of the years before 1968 believed. My origins and experience as a local militant protected me somewhat from this illusion. However, I criticized in vain the Pope of French Marxism, Althusser, when I criticized him only theoretically.

In May '68 I discovered that what is important lies elsewhere. This was my second "departure." The third showed me that even outside, one runs the risk of constructing his own theoretical and Marxist prison. It remained to struggle against self-generated blindness produced by a thirst for power or even by the will to do good and to have others do so as well. Power, in the name of good and for good, has its dangerous blind and deaf spots. In small groups formed after May '68, we lived in miniature what the left is living today, which allows us to warn of the danger of reinflating the pious lies that permit the governing of men. The left refuses to allow free and open radio, and claims to enjoy the monopoly of broadcasting. Who cannot recognize here a political apparatus eager to speak in everyone's stead? The left does so to protect the "masses" from the ill effects of capitalism, but in protecting them, it cuts off their speech.

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At the end of these three experiences of "departure," I rediscovered my own history and its ambiguity. The refusal to think from within one's particular condition is a form of that blindness that affects oneself as well as others. I am Jewish, I am a mortal, I am someone who does not know everything; I have made mistakes and will make more. These are things that one must admit not in order to become modest, but because it is on them that the wisdom of our era is inscribed. Pliouchtoch says, "I was anti-semitic," not in order to bear witness, but because the roots of anti-semitism are discovered in the process of examining one's own anti-semitism.

GALLO: Would you agree with the statement, "To be a man is to be a dissident?"

GLUCKSMANN: Not in the least. One is a dissident at a given moment when confronted with something. To demonstrate eight persons strong in Red Square is certainly an act of dissidence, but there is no monopoly on dissidence. The dissident needn't take the place of the guerrilla or professional revolutionary in the full suit of armor of the total and totalitarian man. We are the "nomads of time," Nadja Mandelstam suggests, capable of the best and the worst, more often of the worst than of the best, but capable of reflecting on this double aspect of ourselves. In his *Chroniques de la résistance*, Valentino Moroz refers to a small tribe living in the Carpathians. It has resisted the Rumanians, Hungarians, Poles, Austrians and Russians. These men have a god who is neither good nor evil, but is like a double-edged sword. We are the same.

THE DIVERSIONISTS*

by Cornelius Castoriadis

Even before the appearance of the most recent specimens, I had already spoken of Parisian fads, the glutting of markets by the collages of a plastic "pop" philosophy and the provincialism of the former capital of universal culture.[1] But the succession of vogues is not a vogue; it is "*the* vogue" according to which our era, particularly in France, lives its relation to "ideas." These successive collages compose one harmonious collage whose *function* is no longer discernible. Surely the significance of a thought or of a corpus of thoughts cannot be reduced to a social and historical function. This reduction, like that of "archaeology," is one of the devices whereby contemporary ideology attempts to avoid the question of truth and falsehood. However, it is not thought nor even ideas that concern us here, but precisely the successive waves of the dominant system's *complementary ideology*. While the *principal ideology*, poor and moth-eaten though it be, continually tries to persuade people that the problem of society ought not be mentioned, or that it is in the process of being solved by the majority, or that it will be raised tomorrow by the opposition, a more sophisticated function is being fulfilled by subtler ideologues before a likewise subtler public. This public assuredly is but an infinitesimal fraction of the "true nation." Its potential qualitative importance is nonetheless considerable. Put positively, what it thinks today will be thought tomorrow or shortly thereafter by a more significant number through

*Translated from *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 20, 1977, by Dorothy Gehrke.

1. For example, in "l'Avertissement" and in the "Introduction" to *La Societé bureaucratique*, vol. I (Paris, 1972).

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national education, the media, etc. Put negatively, if it begins to think improperly (that is, to have pertinent ideas regarding pertinent questions), it could become very dangerous.

In order to comprehend the complementary ideology's functioning and mode of operation, one need only compare the actual problems that have been raised for 30 years and that correspond to the new and profound characteristics of the French and worldwide socio-cultural situation with the axes of successive fashionable discourses—the questions they raise, those they eliminate, and the answers they provide. The obvious and immediate conclusion is that these discourses have operated in such a way that the actual problems remain unspoken or are expelled, concealed, and diverted from the public's attention. The American military term for the missile void of nuclear charge, the missile-lure, which must concentrate the enemy's anti-missile resources upon itself so as to improve the likelihood that others will pass, is *a decoy*. But the traditional military term *diversion* is equally suited. We shall attempt to see why.

In the initial post-war phase, real problems had a name: Stalinism in general and, in France, the nature of the Soviet regime and the "socialisms" that mushroomed in Eastern Europe and China, the Cold War. Center stage was occupied by Sartre. What was he saying? Beginning in 1952, he provided Stalinism—including the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution—with a justification (non-Marxist). Then, when Marxism's inadequacy and insufficiency became flagrant and began to be questioned, Sartre "discovered" Marxism and, cribbing with an introductory economics textbook, wishes to fabricate a new version. Later, scarcely Marxist, Sartre became a "pro-Third Worlder," thus dodging both the social and internal political problems of ex-colonial countries (and of other industrialized nations), as well as the tragedy of those countries that achieved independence only to fall under the domination of an often absurd but always cruel bureaucracy. Here we shall grant him a reprieve for his Maoist period. Unduly harsh judgments? The person in question recently wrote that *Socialisme ou barbarie* was right at the time but wrong in saying so; therefore Sartre rightly was wrong. The walls are not crumbling, and paper can bear anything.

After 1958, the country definitively entered the era of modern capitalism. Economic expansion, accelerated bureaucratization in all spheres of social life, apathy, privatization and planned manipulation of people as workers, consumers, citizens, spouses, students, etc., are securely installed. At the theoretical level, a new analysis is required, an analysis of a system whose main problems are manifestly not "economic contradictions" but the antinomy between the transformation of people into passive executors of the leadership's directives and the impossibility of the system to function even if it ever were to succeed in effectively imposing this transformation. At the practical-political level, extension of the revolutionary problematic to all domains of life, above all to everyday life, and emphasis upon the activity and struggle of humans as *subjects* against an alienating system is necessary. At the level of ideas, the demolition of the system's self-proferred mystifying representation of itself as "scientific," "rational," etc., and *thus* the denunciation of the ideology of "science" and "knowledge" that has become its ultimate justification is required.

Precisely at that moment, structuralism becomes the dominant mode. This is the era of inanities about the death of man, the subject, history, etc.; empty disquisitions on "scientificity" and "the economy" in which Marxo-Althusserian science fails to produce a single statement that *says* something about the actual economy; the denunciation of the idea of alienation, that is, of *heteronomy,* as "Hegelian;" and the continual hushing up of bureaucracy and Stalinism by pure and simple silence or by

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imputing the concentration camps to Stalin's "humanism"—wherein Althusser fared better than Aragon dishonored, which is no small feat. Paper bears anything, as does a certain public. Even as people are increasingly exploited in the name of "science," the attempt is made to persuade them that "science," the "unparalleled revolutionary science" of Althusser's convulsions, is everything. A new dispute arises, new attitudes, norms and values are sought and have begun to be created, and at that very moment emphasis is placed on "structures" in order to evacuate living history.

In turn, living history—wildcat strikes in industrialized nations, Berkeley, mass "informal" movements in the U.S. such as that of blacks, women, youth, Vietnam War protesters, student movements in Europe, and finally, May '68—will abandon structuralism, heaping ridicule upon it.

One can grope with a magnifying glass for *one single sentence* in Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser, Foucault, Barthes, etc., which is in any measure relevant to either the preparation of May '68 or to our later comprehension of the event. It will not be found. Do our intellectuals speak to say nothing? Not in the least. They speak so that people will miss the point.

May and its sequel pose considerable problems. The most important in my view is how this remarkable explosion was able to pass beyond the stage of mere explosion without losing its creativity, how this fantastic unfolding of autonomous activity was able to institute lasting collective organizations that express it without hardening or confiscating it, and how the content it created in abundance was able to find new forms—above all political—which gave access to full social-historical efficacy.

The problem has been completely abandoned. The diversionists are there. Some toy with "desire," the "libido," etc., denounce responsibility as cop terminology, set traps and trap themselves in the blind alley of schizophrenization. Their strict complement, Foucault ("This century will be Deleuzian or will not be," says he—we can rest assured that it will not be...) presents *all* of society as entirely reabsorbed into the power net, thereby erasing the struggles and internal conflicts which cause this net to fail half the time. Latest reports indicate that he, too, has discovered a "common people," but one which is "reduced" the moment it "fixes itself in accordance with a strategy of resistance." Resist if you find it amusing—but without a strategy, or you will no longer be plebes but power. Finally, others are either developing anew or continuing a formidable undertaking of mystification in making Maoist totalitarianism the last hope of humanity—a sinister farce which has lasted at least eight years and has not yet ended: "The Maoist venture...I still consider today to be one of the great pages of recent French history," says Bernard-Henri Levy. Wretched country! The great pages of your history are being written while concentration camp is confused with freedom. For eight years, many of these guiding lights of the spirit who just now are discovering totalitarianism have been teaching the population what to think—i.e., to think Mao Tse-tung.

The French situation today is co-determined by the March 1978 election date. It just so happens that as a function of a series of well known factors, these elections surpass in their *potential* effects the habitual electoral ritual. These effects are not where the parties' staffs pretend to see them. These elections *can* trigger actions and reactions among the population and signal its entry into *political* activity, even in a highly complex and difficult situation. A series of problems should be raised and discussed from this perspective.[2]

2. I intend to discuss this in the next issue of *Telos*.

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A new wave of diversionists, self-baptized "new philosophers" by a double antiphrasis, is accomplishing in its turn its historical function by displacing the question—or by covering up the true questions in advance with "answers" *whose effect and function are to stop short the movement of reflection* and to dull the political and revolutionary critique of totalitarianism on the one hand, and that of Marxism on the other. It does not ask the question "*which* politics?" but affirms that politics itself is evil. It does not raise the question of language but says stupidly, in language: all language and all discourse is of the Master. It does not ask which knowledge, whose, for whom, in order to do what. It says: knowledge is power. It condemns the idea of absolute knowledge—then reaffirms it twice over. The new wave claims absolute knowledge of one thing—the eternality of alienation, oppression and the state. How and from where does it know this? It does not know; it has decided. It also imputes this reaffirmation to the Master in one thousand and one ways: "Whoever says total power...says total knowledge" (Bernard-Henri Levy). It does not ask itself if total power and knowledge can ever be other than a fantasy. Thus, it gives credence to the pure Foucaultian myth of an omniscient and omnipotent power.

Moreover, *this myth is evidently that which power wishes the enslaved to believe*—an omniscience and omnipotence that Foucault does not locate in individuals but in that mysterious entity, "power," in "powers," or in "power networks." Thus for Foucault, there is an impersonal instance of absolute rationality in history. Hegel transcended? Instead, we can laugh. The new wave adopts a sovereign point of view from which it flies over several millenia of history to yield this finding: history has never been other than the power of power and the mastery of the master; his state is the state. The active conflict that disrupts "historical" societies (in the strict sense, from the moment they exist), their internal struggles, the questioning of the instituted imaginary, societies without states, and the birth of the state *in* history are thus brushed aside. The differences between the Asiatic monarchy, Athens and Rome, the Holy Empire, parliamentary republics and modern totalitarianism are unthinkable. What, then, allows Bernard-Henri Levy the opportunity to speak and publish? How is it that he can market "philosophy" rather than be eighth perfume dispenser in a sultan's harem—which perhaps would be more in line with the "order of things?"

The new wave of diversionists does not ask itself how totalitarianism is engendered. In shamelessly pillaging what a few of us have spent thirty years elaborating, it hastily sets apart some elements, distorting their meaning in order to affirm that totalitarianism *is* Marx, *is* Hegel, *is* Fichte, *is* Plato. It understands neither the meaning of thinking nor the *unfathomable* relation maintained between historical thought and reality. Deforming the critique of Marx that we had made in a political, practical, revolutionary perspective—a critique that brought out the capitalist, western, metaphysical heritage of which Marx remained prisoner, *thereby* discovering in Marx what remained well within the confines of a revolutionary purpose[3]—it attempts to draw an absurd conclusion; it is precisely *in so far as* he is revolutionary that Marx would have generated a Gulag. But where do we find the possibility of a revolutionary (or for that matter any) critique of Marx? What permits us to say that in Marx the "system," "rationalism," the "economy" and the "laws of history" are remnants of the capitalist universe? Is it because we adopted God's viewpoint regarding western history, or is it because this same history creates incessant internal struggle which, far from being simple "resistance," has produced a goal and project of radical transformation of the institutions of society, *and continues to produce them?*

3. See my "On the History of the Workers' Movement," *Telos* 30 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 3-42.

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The workers' movement preceded Marx and had nothing to do with Fichte or Hegel. It is Glucksmann who desperately remains a little master thinker in reducing the revolutionary project, an effective moment that has endured for two centuries, to a few philosophers' dated and signed manuscripts. And the movement *continues*. When the new diversionists were for the most part swearing by Althusser and Mao, blacks, women and youth were already in motion. When the question raised is not how to "replace Marxism" but how to create a new relation between thinking and doing, how to eludicate it in terms of a practical project without either degenerating into system or into anything whatsoever, they seek refuge in petty dogmatic speculation, that is, in a series of pure and simple assertions that are none other than the system of the poor. Just as there exists a profession of plumber, so, too, there is a profession of intellectual. The latter massacres writers (in Glucksmann there are blunders of the greatest magnitude concerning Marx, Freud and Cantor) and speaks without rhyme or reason. For example, when Levy affirms that "the totalitarian State is not the police but the intellectuals in power," he is acting like a *political mystifier*. Obviously, if the Brezhnevs are scholars, the Levys can be philosophers. And from what position do they speak? Glucksmann is not an ancient *zek*, and I doubt whether the *zeks* after Fichte have any position. Indeed, but they must be *enlightened*. *Enlighten* them? You mean to say *master* them? As for Levy, the answer is clear; he speaks from everywhere and nowhere. He does not exist as an individual, so he says. He is simply fashioned through and through by the Master; moreover, he utilizes the Master's language which, so he claims, allows nothing to be said that is not of the Master. However, from somewhere else he has knowledge of Good and Evil, literally. The Serpent to this Eve is yet to be revealed...perhaps Clavel?

We are faced with compilation, diversion and deformation of ideas of others who are cited in abundance when they are fashionable, suppressed or cited in the margins (a tactic whose use is spreading) when they are not. In the acceleration of history, the new wave of diversionists is allowing irresponsibility, imposture and the publication business to cross yet another threshold. Otherwise it fulfills its function well. These buffooneries will not disturb the official "left;" they can only comfort and reassure. The CP or the CERES will readily find a young assistant professor to point out the inconsistency and poverty of Levy, Glucksmann, Lardreau, Jambet, etc., without difficulty, and *in so doing they will play the dummy*. Operation "new philosophy" is playing full force in the interests of the party machine; just take a good look at those who criticize us. The diversion—the decoy—will have functioned properly.

SARTRE AND THE DEAF*

by André Gorz

I challenge the whole series of assertions about Sartre made by Cornelius Castoriadis. They cannot possibly be allowed to pass by unnoticed.

1. "In the initial post-war phase,...center stage was occupied by Sartre,"

*Translated from *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 30, 1977, by Dorothy Gehrke.

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Castoriadis writes. Sartre, he affirms, would not speak at that time about Stalinism or the Cold War, nor about any of the "real problems," but rather created a diversion preventing their detection.

Well, Castoriadis, do reread *What Is Literature?* (1947), "Materialism and Revolution," and the texts of the R.D.R. period. You will discover that on a stage occupied by Stalinists on the one hand and pro-Americans on the other, Sartre rejected the two antagonistic camps with equal ferocity and was splattered with mud by both: the bourgeois camp took him for a coprophiliac, while the Stalinists in 1951 described him as a "playful snake" and a "dactylographic hyena." It was his journal alone, *Les Temps modernes*, that, in its first hundred issues, raised all the "real problems."

2. "What was he saying?" Castoriadis pursues. "Beginning in 1952, he provided Stalinism—including the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution—with a justification (non-Marxist)."

I do not know, Castoriadis, whether in your eyes a "Marxist justification" would have been either possible or preferable, and I question the meaning of your parenthesis. The fact is that after siding with the anti-American camp in 1953, Sartre condemned Soviet intervention in Hungary in a lengthy article in *Les Temps modernes* ("The Spectre of Stalin"), which marked his break with the French and the Soviet Communist Parties.

3. "Then, when Marxism's inadequacy and insufficiency became flagrant," Castoriadis continues, "Sartre 'discovered' Marxism and, cribbing with an introductory economics textbook, wished to fabricate a new version."

Here, Castoriadis, you are free to think as you please. However, if I were at the same time a psychoanalyst and socialist revolutionary theoretician, I would question with concern psychoanalysts' and revolutionary theoreticians' constant propensity to desire a monopoly on "correct thought" so strongly that even a Castoriadis becomes incapable of recognizing in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* the foundations of a theory of alienation (and of its collective liquidation), of which we are precisely in need in order to extricate ourselves from economism, dogmatism, scientism and structural-Marxism, and in order to clear the terrain of this unfortunate "concept invented in haste" (Sartre), which is the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

4. "Later, scarcely Marxist, Sartre became a 'pro-Third Worlder'," Castoriadis goes on, "thus dodging both the social and internal political problem of ex-colonial countries."

At a time when the French left, with the French Communist Party in the fore, was urging the French colonies to wait obediently while France made its socialist revolution and would magnanimously grant them internal autonomy, at this same time (the latter half of the 1950s), Sartre was engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle, first in Algeria, then in Vietnam, a lever which, in his eyes, would exert its disruptive effect upon the heart of capitalist metropolises. You, Castoriadis, do not find in Sartre "*one single sentence*" (you emphasize these words) that "in any measure" prefigures the American "movement" and student movements in Europe—in short, May '68. You must therefore not have been in the United States or you would have experienced the decisive influence of what you disdainfully term Sartre's "Third-Worldism" on the American "movement;" you must not have been alongside students in Berlin and Paris for whom Vietnam, Che, and the anti-imperialist struggle were cardinal references; you must not have been among the students who in May '68 carried Sartre triumphantly on their shoulders into the great, overflowing amphitheater of the Sorbonne.

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All that you say, on the other hand, Castoriadis, is not false—far from it. But the sound of the guillotine that punctuates your assertions and your arrogant desire to be the only one who is right are intolerable. Glucksmann tells you that he cannot tolerate Stalinists either and that there are various ways of being "Stalinist" and various ways of declaring oneself, in the face of opposition, to be the depository of a "revealed truth:" all lead to the same result. On this point, at least, I am in agreement with Glucksmann. I would like you to reflect on the profound origins of the deafness which prevents you from hearing so audible a truth.

REPLY TO ANDRE GORZ*

by Cornelius Castoriadis

WHO was right and WHO was wrong? An irrelevant question. What was true and what was not? What, in the presuppositions and methods of both parties, made it possible to see this and what prevented that possibility? We cannot dispense with these questions unless we dispense with thinking and learning.

It is not necessary to rewrite the story—especially when the story continues. For it was *in 1973* at *Actuel* that Jean-Paul Sartre was making declarations tantamount to a *prior justification* of the eventual Moscow trials: "The revolution implies the violence and existence of a more radical party that imposes itself to the detriment of other, more conciliatory groups... It is inevitable that the revolutionary party will reach the point of also striking some of its members." Who then is deaf, Gorz? And who justifies the guillotines in advance?

I took care to indicate that I was speaking of the post-1952 Sartre, but I could just as well have spoken of the pre-1952 Sartre. Do reread *What Is Literature?* with today's eyes, and you will see that the assumptions are the same: The USSR is a "socialist country," its safe-keeping is off limits for discussion, the revolution there has "broken down," "encirclement" explains everything; and the French Communist Party is criticized because the "means" it utilizes are contrary to "the end pursued..., the abolition of a regime of oppression."[1] "We know that in Russia he [the worker] engages in discussion with the writer himself and that a new relationship between the public and writer has appeared there."[2] Sartre knew that in 1947! And he is a writer!

Sartre's non-Marxist justification of Stalinism can only be fully appreciated when we note that a few years later he proclaimed without warning that Marxism is "the unsurpassable philosophy of our times."[3] He thus inaugurated what was gradually becoming the style of the era: today I say white, tomorrow black, and if you quote me or dare ask me why or how, you are a censor and a terrorist, nostalgic for the guillotine.

It is worth rereading the "Reply to Naville."[4] One can meditate on the

*Translated from *Le Nouvel Observateur*, July 4, 1977, by Dorothy Gehrke.

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* (New York, 1956), p. 199.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
3. "It remains therefore the philosophy of our times. We cannot go beyond it because we have not gone beyond the circumstances which engendered it." In Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York, 1963), p. 30.
4. In *Les Temps Modernes*, March 1956.

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revolutionary radical character and audacious realism of these sentences: "How can he [Naville] not see that the evolution of the USSR is accomplished with and by the totality of the state apparatus? Why isn't he convinced by the knowledgeable progression of declarations and decisions that this is a complex operation led by those who have taken over since the death of Stalin?... This plan of action is applied very skillfully by stages and each stage is constructed so as to contain the announcement of the next... The leaders carry along the masses and reveal to them a new future and a new hope." The entire "political" Sartre is there: The "Café du Commerce" on the planet Mars. But what is this *mentality* that only affixes itself to *leaders?* And what does its relative *echo* signify?

There are indications that this skillful preparation of stages was subject to some failure because a few weeks later, Poznan, the Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution erupted. Sartre then writes "The Spectre of Stalin." Those who so desire can content themselves with a superficial and obvious "condemnation" of Soviet intervention. At the time, Claude Lefort showed in minute detail[5] that this tortuous text contains a subtle justification that revolved around the idea of the revolution's "slippage to the right" *after* October 23—even though that was precisely when the workers' councils were beginning to form. "You claim to have saved socialism: yes, on November 4. This is at least a subject for debate..." And this gem—100 per cent condensed Sartre: "At last, the masses, after having desired freedom under the regime, demanded the freedom to give themselves that regime which appealed to them. Thus, it is correct that the insurrection veered to the right."[6] I am entirely in agreement with you, Gorz: "There are various ways to be Stalinist, various manners of declaring oneself, in the face of opposition, to be the depository of a 'revealed truth'." For example, to dare to say that the demand of the masses for the right to give themselves the regime agreeable to them signifies "veering to the right..."

The specificity of Fanon and that which Sartre emphasized in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* was obviously not the anti-imperialist struggle but Third-World messianism and the virtual obliteration of the political and social problematic, there as well as here. Is it not time to ask what is going on in China and Algeria, in Guinea and Cuba, in Vietnam and Cambodia? And how far along are those who were made to believe that the struggle against their own imperialism required the abandonment of all critical attitudes concerning what was occurring in formerly colonial countries?

It is conceivable, as Gorz writes, that my inability to "recognize in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* the foundations of a theory of alienation" originates from a "deafness" or a "desire for a monopoly." Nonetheless another hypothesis cannot, with full scientific rigor, be ruled out: that this book contains neither the foundations of such a theory nor the foundations of anything else.

5. Claude Lefort, "La Méthode des Intellectuels dits Progressistes," *Socialism ou barbarie*, 23 (January 1958). Reprinted in his *Eléments d'une critique de la bureaucratie* (Paris, 1971), pp. 260-284.

6. Cf. *Les Temps Modernes*, 129-131, p. 617.

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THE NOISE AND THE MESSAGE*

by Edgar Morin

The scuffle that began in a corner of the "Intelligentsia Saloon" has become a general brawl. The quarrel of the "new philosophers" has become a free-for-all of everyone against everyone. What is at issue in all this noise resulting the breaking waves of contrary vociferations?

1. Is it a question of the *new* marketing that has recently transformed philosophy into neo-merchandise, or rather that serves to introduce a neo-merchandise as neo-philosophy and previously unheard-of young talent as neo-stars (from which has resulted the scorn of purists and lone wolves, the inevitable irritation of the competitors for stardom, and the jealous fury of the *ideological box office's* old regulars)? Certainly, this phenomenon of marketing, stardom and "mass-media-ization" merits study, discussion and criticism, but it would be diversionary to forget the ideological basis of the problem in showing interest only in the advertising component of its promotion.

2. Is it a question of the existence or non-existence of the "new philosophy?" In fact, one can readily see that such a new philosophy exists neither for its promulgators nor for its disparagers, and that this label refers us to the preceding problem of marketing, thus also obscuring the basis of debate.

3. Is it a question of a new current of "nihilism" or political despair issuing from Althusser-Maoism and sung by an intellectual playboy with a wardrobe created by "pessimism?" It would truly be too easy for the owners of the old, ready-made thoughts (Marxism) to focus attention on neo-ready-made thoughts. This would be to forget all too easily that the hope manufactured for current consumption by the ideology of the so-called left is as decrepit as the neo-despair with which the elites' consumption will nourish itself for some time.

4. The radical problem from which all this arose is that of the absolute insufficiency of a so-called leftist thought schema propped up by banalized notions of a Marxism that is itself sclerotic. Here are the questions inevitably raised by historical experience:

—Should the notions of exploitation and domination be reserved for capitalism alone or do they apply to precapitalist social forms as well? Hasn't a form, at the same time new and old, of domination, slavery and exploitation been created precisely in the so-called socialist countries? Is capitalism today the only cause of the evils of our time, such as wars, concentration camps, slavery and police repression?

—Should the phenomenon of concentration camps in the USSR continue to be either repressed or considered as accidental and contingent? Is the term totalitarian a term that must always be considered inadequate or uninteresting when it comes to the USSR or China?

—Doesn't Marxism, revered by the intelligentsia (e.g., as the "unsurpassable philosophy of our times"), henceforth hide more than it reveals: doesn't the Marxist vulgate, incapable of applying Marx's critical vision to the USSR, make us incapable of considering the reality itself of so-called socialist power? Doesn't it in fact contribute, in blinding us, to the preparation of new slavery?

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—Is it not necessary today to reconsider Marx as an inspired, contradictory and complex thinker, as necessary but not sufficient? Is it not necessary to re-evaluate the word socialism?

—Is it not necessary, if one claims to be socialist (i.e., if the term is defined by the aspirations it translates) to refuse to consider the Soviet system as socialist?

—Is it not necessary to resume the analysis of concentration camp society at the point where David Rousset left off in 1950 amid the heckling of those who called themselves the left, and to resume the analysis of totalitarian society outlined by Hannah Arendt in the face of the intelligentsia's bored indifference? Should not the analysis of bureaucratic society be taken up again at the point where Castoriadis and Lefort had left it in *Socialisme ou barbarie*? Is it not necessary to try to understand the nature of a system in which the word socialism is a barbarism that camouflages the barbarity of a so-called progressive society?

—Is it not necessary to initiate radical challenges today?

5. The preceding concerns our political attitude in a fundamental way and will certainly concern our attitude in March 1978.

The principal problem for March 1978 is not to ask ourselves whether we risk entering into a process that may lead to popular democracy; this hypothesis must still not be considered as insane. For a certain number of influential intellectuals, who constitute a feeble electoral minority but who could carry weight in a very close election, the problem is the following: We cannot give any credit to a French party that calls itself part of the left while continuing to speak of the USSR or other "popular democracy" as a socialist country or a country where socialism is being built. We can give no credit to a party that appeals to this sort of "socialism" as an authority. However, neither can we give any credit to a party that calls itself socialist and which, for practical and strategic reason—perhaps above all for reasons of deficiency and theoretical debility—is incapable of coming to terms with the fact that concentration camps in the USSR are central to the very nature of that regime.

In this vein, I suggest the formation of a committee against concentration camps and totalitarianism, which would demand of those parties appealing to the left, to socialism and revolution, substantive answers that would allow us in 1978 to know what it is that we are voting or not voting for.

SPRINGTIME WEEPERS*

by Régis Debray

A joke cannot be refuted, except when it drags on and concerns a solemn topic. The "new philosophy" has all the attributes needed to pass for the highlight of the season. As producers, distributors, critics and directors of their own works, these protagonists take themselves so seriously that it is necessary to react in kind. Because these infantrymen are advancing in a phalanx on the sparse summits of pessimism, we know to keep a look-out for trouble in the press, radio and television.

Certain recluses, doubly heretical with respect to red and white orthodoxies, nonetheless have much to say about socialism's adventures and misadventures, its blind

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alleys and its vicious circles. But the atmosphere of the times brings forth some things while causing others to disappear, and the wind that swells the black sails blows neither alone nor indiscriminately. If one understands by "new philosophers" that arc of the circle that extends from Glucksmann to Lardreau and whose radii have the common center of settling accounts with dialectics, materialism, science and, peripherally, Marx, the essential problem is to comprehend why, in the context of today's relations of cultural production, these authors emerge in a position of strength. Control and admirable utilization of the media does not explain everything; neither does the conspicuously poor quality of their products.

Whether or not they form a new right is unimportant at this time: first, because this right is not *new* but archaic in its themes, ancestral in its filiations, and cyclical in its resurgence, and second and especially, because to say that one is of the right is not an insult and even less a damaging argument. When Raymond Aron studies Clausewitz or Pierre Chaunu studies the contours of East Indian trade, we all have something to learn. They enrich the common stock of knowledge. The question is thus not to know whether the new stars are or are not on the right—which is merely a position in the force field at a given moment and not a state of nature—but whether they have something to *teach* us.

Like any technique, philosophy, even when idealist, has constraints in the same way that concepts have rules, the first of which is to be the concept of some thing, i.e., of a object definable according to a given method. Without this, there are but notions and general ideas, and one regresses to a stage of rhetoric. Our gurus give orations that no one would dare give once one had discovered the existence of the world, the complexity of the real and the sciences that approach it. It is still necessary to rub up against the real and to finish school. In not sticking one's nose outside, one ends up mistaking adolescent acne for an eruption of creative fever. Constructing an object, conducting research and delimiting a domain of knowledge are what firmly attach philosophy to the real and make a person the opposite of a sophist.

To cite examples of philosophers indifferent or hostile toward the "official" left, united or not, we have a Deleuze or a Foucault who, for twenty years, as good mechanics, were dismantling in order to reassemble in an original fashion Hume and Kant (not to mention the admirable Proust) in the former case, and, in the latter, the seventeenth-century clinic and the institution of insanity. This enormous and fastidious task surely gives them the right to possess some ideas about the course of events and, in particular, the system of powers. One can only oppose these philosophers philosophically. They summon up debate, but first they merit respect, to put it mildly. The young generation does not seem to have these scruples. It has made a standing jump into capital-letter azimuths: Power, Knowledge, Thought, Desire, Mastery, etc. Bouvard and Pécuchet would have proceeded more cautiously.

When one takes as one's *object* (and not *target*, of which any watchdog is capable) the immediate real, for example, "socialist barbarity," "concentrationary gangrene," or "totalitarian dictatorship," the topic is sufficiently serious that one considers collecting documentation, comparing, verifying, and defining space, time and a point of geographical and chronological reference. Our blasé judges do not stoop so low.

They know everything in advance; that is, they speak without sufficient grounds. They know science without dominating or practicing one. They know socialist countries without having gone to any even once on vacation, were it only to see how the ungraded coal is surviving, without having learned even one of their languages in order to follow the press and publications and to converse with the inhabitants. They

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know political activism without having themselves engaged in political action, i.e., without having exercised their responsibility. They know princes without having worked for any as Machiavelli did, they know states without being familiar with the wheels of government, and they know war without having shot a rifle nor having undergone bombardment. Yet they denounce impostures right and left... Do not these grumblers, worn out by hardship, talk louder than they live?

In short, our century tires them—or disgusts them. In their eyes, none of the millions of fools who still dare to mill around under the windows is to be taken seriously, nor is the useless accumulation of parties and unions that amuse and abuse themselves with the left's baby toys in the face of a right which defends a hoard of money. They have discarded all these. They take pity on these lowly materialities. They should be left alone with their somber thoughts, as idle as are all thoughts that are merely overviews. I fear that our friends—I mean adversaries—will convert very trivial isolation into bitter deprivation, just as they turn infrapolitics back into metapolitics. Having no mastery of the concrete, they have chosen to repudiate mastery and the concrete. The mood of the left bank is that of an Apocalypse. This would be sublime, were it not all too convenient. Once the actuality of the real and the reality of the present have been driven away, controls, criteria and sanctions no longer exist. In this push-button philosophy, analyses are conducted at a distance. Though we may roll our eyes, it does not frighten us to be reminded of truisms like the influence of the *Aufklärung* on Marx, the crafty teleology of dialectics or of cumulative conception, truisms stated in the future past of the progressive tense. We are already informed, thank you, Bernard-Henri. The difficulties begin later, in the relation to be established between these idealistic profundities and Marx's work as an historian.

These essayists, you will say, do not write with their brows bathed in sweat for the simple reason that they dip their pens in the inexhaustible blood of the plebes. They do not like history, which perhaps does not like them either. This does not prevent them from writing in the shadow cast by two immense pillars which lend to their writings a quality of being more than a little out of focus, but theatrically so, with a decor of historicity. Generating an expressionist aura, a choking gasp, and the haggard, breathless air specific to witnesses crushed by their mission, these pillars are '68 and the Gulag. Omnipresent and never described, incessantly invoked and never analyzed, these sledge-hammer references permit solid economy of reasoning and documentation. At the slightest objection, the authors step aside and let the blasphermer gaze on the watch-towers of Stalinist camps, on the great vacillation of certitudes on the streets of Paris. They have the mask of tragedy in front and the huge anarchistic laugh behind. A quick turnabout and the trick has been played. Janus-faced as they are, they leave you to choose between an ill-mannered pedant and a cop.

Sixty-eight is not yet an historical phenomenon, very regrettably. It is an idea—massive, grandiose. Are we speaking of the student '68 or the worker '68? Urban or rural? Parisian or suburban? Of its outcome in June? Of its function as a mobilizing myth or alibi? Of its political education—in order to do better next time? A fig for these details. In the dominant culture, '68 floats like an opera stage where each person can sing his aria, tremolo or lamentation. It is a *theme* with personal variations, with lyrics set to it, but it is not yet an *object* of analysis nor even a subject of lived remembrances. So much the worse; one day it will be. While waiting, I shall make one remark: the sole thought that has been and remains directly coupled with '68, that of

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the situationists, presents the peculiarity of having appeared one year previous. *La Société du spectacle* dates from 1967, as does *Traité de savoir-vivre*. This critique, stemming from everyday life, is not only superb, but it constitutes one of the two attempts at post-Marxist thought to have made itself known to the public. The bewildering paradox is that it is constructed with essentially pre-Marxist materials for the most part, the Feuerbachian Vaneigem and Debord turning back upon Marx. I will never understand why the basic question of how such an anachronism has managed to attract contemporary attention and why Feuerbach could function *after* and *against* institutional Marxism does not plague the doctors of law more than it does. I am nonetheless astonished that no one yet has thought of leaving two empty chairs in the debates and colloquia on the atmosphere of the times for these two faceless and nameless men who are far above the myriad of little cousins who have been pillaging them for a decade.

The other attempt was that of Foucault. Whether it can stand on its own two feet or not, no one can challenge the fact that it had never been seen anywhere. The question that this thinking poses for us is, can a Foucaultian politics exist or not, can the dismissal of concepts and schemas supporting the unity of the field until now baptized as "political" (e.g., representation, organization, totality, program, popularization of and by the state) distinguish an "elsewhere" possessing a content of its own, a content other than a negative guerrilla or an all-too-urban guerrilla? I do not believe so, but if there must be a debate on this matter, the substance is there. Speechless in the garden, although heavily laden with secrets of the riot, Glucksmann and Levy are much more talkative in the court, perched as they are on the shoulders of Solzhenitsyn, saint and prophet of our world (the Third World excluded, and for good reason). Through him, they have lived the revolution of October and all revolutions, they have braved Stalin and all Stalins, and they have discovered the houses of the dead. Forty years ago, Trotsky and his followers did the same, and no one responded. Even better, Trotsky gave an *explanation* for what it is worth, but no one speaks of it any longer. The Trotskyists publish a good deal, but I have never seen any of them on the television program "Apostrophes." Agreed: they are old-fashioned and make no appeal to mystic communion but rather to the intelligence of outcasts—nothing new, and therefore, unsaleable. They have paid dearly for the Gulag but to no avail, because they lacked the proper catchword.

The fate of the term Gulag can be explained as follows. Our society lives on the exchange and circulation of myths. In its current polemical usage, the Gulag constitutes the most gigantic ideological illusion ever to conceal the reality it designates. The "new philosophers" have contributed as no one else has to making the reality of the Gulag a myth. In the precise sense of the word, a myth is neither a lie nor fiction. It serves above all to hide that which it designates, to disallow intelligence by veiling concrete determinations, and to simplify the complex to the point of attributing to it the false clarity of the obvious. Dissolving history into nature, the sheer idea of the Gulag conjures away historical logic and the logical history of the real phenomenon, thereby depriving us of any grasp of it. Extricated by metaphysical hypostasis from the system of causes underlying the Gulag, it has acquired, thanks to the "new philosophers," the eternity of Evil and the opaque fatality of its recurrences. Make way for *interpretation* which can henceforth proliferate to infinity, since there are no longer any criteria but morality and culture.

Let us thrash out our culpabilities. One gets the anti-socialism one deserves. In similar fashion, every crisis of scientific reason witnesses a comeback of the merchants

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of God, of dreams or libido, of those who are only too happy to interpret as retreat what is merely the passage to a level of higher rationality which incorporates what preceded it. Thus, if the current crisis of the socialist idea provokes a return of the same old songs, it is because for a long time the officials of the idea have not been doing their job. By means of cajoling their classics, the archivists have allowed theory to fly away without giving an explanation for its incarnations here below. Marxism is biting its own tail while trampling on its old manuscripts. It still functions as theory but only in western capitalist societies. In those societies that appeal to its authority, it no longer functions as anything more than a state religion. Where Marxist heads exist, they have no bodies. Where the body (the "real socialism," as the Soviets say) exists, there is no head. This decapitation was initiated by the Stalinist era, which lowered the iron curtain of armored ideology on bureaucratic society in such a way that we are still awaiting the analysis of "real socialism." There is nothing more urgent. Eurocommunism can be forgiven for not having the theory it desires: only a really existent object is susceptible to analysis. It cannot be pardoned for long for not having produced a concrete analysis of that which it rejects—the model of Soviet society—not only because it operates efficaciously and tangibly right under our noses, but also because there is no other means of avoiding the spontaneous reproduction of a phenomenon than to know its laws of apparition and operation. All else is nothing but good intentions or electoral banter.

In the best of cases, the best of the "new philosophers" may one day reveal themselves, in the face of "real socialism," to be what the utopian socialists were in relation to liberal capitalism: willing weepers with a few intuitions. Unfortunately, it is not in vituperating State and Party that one discovers why they are there and how they function. Owing to Marx and his descendants, something is known today about the exploitation of man by man. Very little is yet known about the mechanisms of the domination of man over man, regarding which Marxism falls short. Capitalism—the reign of the economic—has not yet yielded its system to us, and there is every indication that Marxism-Leninism is but its ideology (justification and point of honor), as were the systems of Smith and Montesquieu for the initial stages of capitalism. We have before us this exciting task: to make socialism yield its deeper laws. The easily explained paradox is that this task cannot be carried out by those immediately concerned. In any case, to mechanically assimilate the Gulag and "real socialism" is to refuse to see, to retreat from the task. It is above all to neglect the fundamental fact that the second is perfectly capable of surviving the first because the second can function without the first. And this is perhaps even worse. This type of socialism cannot offer "freedom," but it can offer "happiness." The sedentary ought to take the train and make an inquiry. At times, what is intolerable is not the crime but happiness and its price.

To approach this knowledge there is a need for concept workers and not sententious charlatans. Only once we know how to integrate patiently the achievements of modern science: biology, thermodynamics, information theory, history of religions, ethnology, psychoanalysis, etc., will we one day be able to comprehend and not condemn phenomena as decisive as the cult of personalities (yesterday, today and tomorrow), the permanence of the institution, the constant reinforcement throughout the planet of national particularities and their attendant technical and political centralizations, the fragmentation of universalities postulated for the benefit of lived identifications, the sacralization of power, etc.

The diversion of the "new philosophers" would be no more serious than a spring flood

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had it not intervened at this precise moment in our political and theoretical growth. By cluttering up the landscape with approximations and conditioned reflexes, it will contribute to spoiling the efforts of the workers. Besides, it may provoke, on the other side, a frightened or vindictive falling back upon orthodoxies not equipped to confront reality. If the confrontation between dogmatism and the refined sensibility, between lead-footed manuals and the wave of spiritualist souls is resumed, this time we will return to zero.

RESPONSE TO THE MASTER CENSORS*

by Bernard-Henri Lévy

One short year ago, when I brought together a few friends in the columns of a weekly, I had no idea that the "new philosophers"—the title of the publication—would have such a strange fate. We were stating, repeating our refusal of clans, sects and churches. I have never since failed to note the disparity between these writers—who often had nothing in common save biographical chance. And suddenly a so-called debate is giving form and unity to that which had none whatsoever. An army of master censors is dead set on imprisoning free and dispersed thoughts. Perhaps, I did commit the error of inventing or proposing the *word*: others will receive the credit for fashioning the *thing*. For "new philosophy" is definitively born—although paradoxically it is Debray and Castoriadis who have baptized it.

Nor did I suspect only a few weeks ago, when I made public my *Barbarie à visage humain* that it would so quickly crystallize so much hate and bad faith, stupidity and baseness. In it, I was attempting, not without apprehension, to raise a few of the questions that trouble the present times. I offered some theses of a political nature to the philosophical and secondarily political debate. I was testing hypotheses that I knew would be disputed, but not necessarily slandered. For reasons that still escape me, the debate is degenerating and argument is giving way to insult.

It is not unusual to see, here and elsewhere, men as diverse as Debray and Deleuze, Castoriadis and Elleinstein, Poulantzas and Salini side by side, with their positions entwined, denouncing an "uproar" and "advertising campaign" which has now become greatly indebted to them? According to what mysterious logic are so many texts and violent declarations accumulated so as to always arrive at this identical and positively monotonous conclusion: the "new philosophers" are not worth one hour of trouble and it is high time to return to serious matters? The old wolves are emerging from their lair, the watchdogs from their kennel, and the heroes from their legend. One of them tastefully reminds us of his service record among princes, peoples and revolutions. Another demands that his copyrights, rights of authorship and, in a word, quotations be returned. A third laments, like a Birotteau gone bankrupt, the "dirty work" that robbed him of his "century." We have never laid claims to the honor conferred upon us; but it behooves us to state that if the republic of the learned groups itself mobilizes in full force to attack our books, it is perhaps because it finds there some discomforting truths. I have never believed that I personally possess the "truth" nor even that I am "right." In the face of such a sacred union and chorus of blame, I

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finally ask myself whether I have unawares touched some sensitive spot.

But which? I haven't a clue, and our worthy detractors take great pains not to reveal it. What is striking in this debate is above all the confusion and curious method that reign over it... We are told that André Glucksmann was mistaken about Cantor and Marx; we have not been told why or precisely where. My book is, so it seems, null and void: I am waiting for the substantive critique which will perhaps convince. Everything happens, in reality, as if we had not written books, as if we had all written very nearly the same book, and as if one were speaking to us of books we had not written. In the even that it might not otherwise become known, I will point out that neither Clavel nor Glucksmann has published a treatise on and against the *Union de la Gauche*, that nowhere in *Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes* is it said that Mitterand is bringing Gulag to the French, and that *L'Ange* never declares that its authors are rallying around the politics of Giscard. Experts on amalgams, our pedants of concepts have mastered the art of blurring problems and confusing genres.

Of what importance is this if the really essential thing, apparently, is not what we say but the fact that we are speaking; if we are reproached for speaking and thus existing, being listened to and thus heard, and for being "everywhere" and thus having (already?) an audience? Let us disregard their colossal contempt for a "manipulated," grossly "conditioned" opinion. What is serious is that reflection, to listen to them, is worthwhile only in the darkest secrecy, and that the intellectual of their dreams should be accursed and somewhat suicidal as in the novels of Balzac. If I correctly understand Debray, the Gulag becomes a myth from the moment that a few voices apply themselves to the task of reciting the lessons of Solzhenitsyn. If I correctly understand Castoriadis, anti-Marxism becomes fashionable the moment it spreads beyond a closed circle of former Trotskyists. Is the truth tolerable only on condition that it remain confidential? Are revolt and dissidence the private property of the ex-servicemen of *Socialisme ou barbarie?* In any case, this is not our view. We are inclined to think that it is always good to speak truths.

It is not that I scorn the slow and patient work done in silence by these "concept workers," of whom there is suddenly such a high opinion. When necessary, I knew to give them the bow I thought they deserved. I did not need the new "junior masters" to help me discover libraries and the maze of archives. I am simply revolting against the strange idea that an intellectual must remain silent until he has devoted many long years to research and hard labor. I am stunned by this new terrorism that is determined to censure a text only because it has not paid its dues to the spirit of seriousness and dullness.

Régis Debray denies the right of speech to anyone who has not assimilated "the most recent attainments of biology, thermodynamics, information theory, history of religions, ethnology, psychoanalysis..." I regret that I do not have a taste for posthumous works. Castoriadis is disappointed. He expected me to teach him how to distinguish between "the Asiatic monarchy, Athens and Rome, and the Holy Roman Empire." I must confess that it is true that I have not written a treatise on world history. I wrote an urgent book because urgency today is a genre unto itself.

There remains the main accusation, the one that without a doubt offended me personally the most: this topic of the "new right" of which I am, of which we are, the diabolical instigators. Once again, I had initially made the decision not to respond, convinced that the texts would answer for themselves. But the tone of some recent articles forces a restatement and calls for further illumination.

What astounds me in these articles is the atmosphere of blackmail and almost of

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intimidation in which they are willfully bathed. Never have intellectuals been so crudely, so brutally summoned to exhibit their ballots; never has anyone attempted to such an extent to enlist them in political batallions. True, for the first time the grandstands of the *Programme Commun* are empty; but this is also the first time that a program has imposed a choice between unconditional support and silence. It is also true that we are ignorant about the harsh necessities of politicking; but do political strategists know what thinking and speaking mean? Do they realize what they are doing when they order us to get ready to fight? We are occasionally charged with obscurity under the pretext that we are putting enlightenment on trial. Is not the obscurity especially attributable to these future princes for whom reflection is never more than the word of the masters? We are called irresponsible: what about the irresponsibility of those who under the cover of discipline are now beginning to make their dissidents toe the line?

The case of the intellectuals is of little importance. For some time now, they have ceased to be the leaven and salt of the earth. What is on the other hand dangerous is the vision of the world presupposed by this kind of approach, the unacknowledged totalitarianism it silently begins to ground. When Poulantzas, for example, writes that our books and a few others can be divided into "leftist themes" on the one hand and "rightist themes" on the other, and that their mechanism will be fully understood once they have thus been bent and catalogued, I ask myself what Zhdanovism is being reborn. I wonder what idea of man is necessary for such logic. And I want to protest that my head, that our heads, can perhaps not be reduced to this impoverished electoral grid. I hope that the French do not have a giant polling booth in place of a brain.

Having said this, what have we done to deserve such "treatment?" We have the "audacity," it is said, to "criticize" the left; we dare to put socialism on trial from the inside. Agreed. Nonetheless, I thought that in these days of armed vigils, discussion was open, desirable and even fruitful. We are playing the "game of the right;" we are jeopardizing the left's victory: this is to give us a lot of credit and to be very badly acquainted with the party machines, which, after all, have never battled by means of intervening philosophers. We proclaim "too high" that which many think "too low;" we play the game of truth with our cards on the table. I was not aware that the left's coherence was made up of so many impostures that a little lucidity would suffice to unmask it. For ten years now, the sole perspective—and I do say *perspective*—of an electoral victory has sterilized and suspended all profound reflection on the problems of socialism. Today, the sheer immanence of this victory functions as a fanciful principle of scarcity. This political super-ego that formerly suppressed far left fringe groups is now in a good position to spread to the whole of France. A small group of militants was unfortunate; an entire population of militants is a normalized population.

At this hour the damage is done. Because some of us, schooled in the bitter lessons of a century of barbarism, have pushed the hypothesis of pessimism to its limits, it is blithely concluded that we are abdicating our duty as men and our mission as intellectuals. Because I have stated my decision to no longer be a merchant of dreams, trafficking in idols and illusions, I am accused of sanctifying evil and preaching submission—a curious way of inverting the accusation and the proof, for abdication, so far as I know, is primarily an act of those mindless servants of a providential history who beg to kneel before it and worship its commandments. The most insufferable betrayal is nonetheless that of the prophets who, tired of promising the advent of a

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Kingdom that never comes, above all weary of hearing men's cries and protests, end up one day or another with rifles in their hands. These preachers of submission are well known to the people; they are the cheerful scholars of "goodness" and the life that will "change;" they are the omniscient princes who even know the road to happiness. There are some of us today who think that "to resist" is also to dare to say no to deadly marriages and to semblances of smiling princes. There are a few of us who believe that a sham political front often ends in blood baths, even if, unfortunately, it is always the blood of others.

But why argue? Reason is never a match for the passion of ignorance. I wonder if in some dark den our account is already settled in the black book of exclusions. The question is no longer whether we are or are not "objectively" reactionary, because the left says we are, and it reigns without contest over this "objectivity." The essential thing is not that the right retrieve us, but that the new prince, game master for the hour, acts in such a manner so as to cause the retrieval to take place. I stated in the beginning that our master censors are inventing new philosophy; tomorrow they could very well invent the new right. Men like Jean Daniel, Jacques Julliard and a few others surmise this, and it is in this sense that I interpret their concern to hear us. Others scarcely care to, and I bet that they will be there when the day comes to account for our "desertion" with a final spin of the wheel of the old Marxist dialectic.

It is still necessary to understand one another. When I sometimes declare that it is the left to whom I am addressing myself, I have in mind *that part of the left* that agrees to remember that the word "socialism" is experienced as a blight for one quarter of humanity. I have in mind *that part of the people of the left* who will never bring themselves to sacrifice the few simple principles that make societies livable on the altar that is constantly rebuilt with the state's new arguments. Naturally, I am also thinking of this deep-thinking left, which I know refuses to choose between the virtues of the gallows and the charms of the guillotine. Basically, this is what distinguishes us from the intellectuals of the state: we are prepared to do all in our power to prevent this kind of choice from one day becoming inevitable. *They* are doing all they can to make it not only unavoidable, but legitimate and reasonable.

REPLY TO LEVY*

by Jacques Rancière

If the debates over a hypothetical new philosophy and its political affiliation have taken on exaggerated proportions in regard to their object, this is because they have crystalized certain processes which are as yet difficult to discern, concerning the status of intellectuals and their relation to power.

The issue is initially presented in the form of a paradox, crudely expressed in Bernard-Henri Lévy's strange piece, "Reply to the Master Censors." Strange, because a censor is, by definition, someone to whom one does not reply. A censor is not one who criticizes what you say, but rather who prevents you from speaking by virtue of the power vested in him by a political apparatus or by those who control the publishing market. Yet today we are witnessing a team of thinkers who, speaking from the forum provided them by the state apparatus and by the book business as well as by both right-

*Translated from *Le Nouvel Observateur*, July 31, 1977, by Maryška Suda.

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and left-wing press, insist that they are being censored and that their fate is doubtless already being decided "in some dark den." We are dissident thinkers, they say, we question all power and confound the machinations of both right and left politics. Then, too, the aspirants to left power throw up to us "The Republic of Dogmatism" for summoning intellectuals to "display their ballots." In this passion play in which intellectuals who occupy positions of power identify themselves with all victims of persecution (Socrates, Christ, the Jews, the Gulag victims), I see more than a simple publicity stunt marking the entry of philosophy into the word-system imposed by that instrument of state-commercial domination, *L'Apostrophe*. I recognize in it the familiar practice of official leftists, which consists of exercising authority in the name of non-power, the better to silence the "Jacobins" who might challenge them. And, in this amalgamated nonsense that turns Deleuze into an electoral fellow-traveller of Salini, I see not the expression of a "New Right," but rather the time-honored tactic of the trade-union machines that, in order to share in the power of state and management, denounce those who challenge them as agents of bosses and power. It is by equating all opposition with left electoral campaigning, that that portion of the left which is forever seeking out "useful interlocutors" recognizes the designated spokesmen of every kind of dissidence that has troubled the left machines in the last ten years.

Thus a strange operation is carried out, which claims in the name of the intellectuals and on the basis of their self-proclaimed avant-gardism, a professional qualification for dissidence, aimed at turning the professional union of great intellectuals into a kind of recognized party or, better yet, into an official state organ of dissidence. From the authentic struggle of Eastern dissidents and support for that struggle, they slip into "bare-handed combat" against Hegelian texts, and from there into the fight against "barbarism," all of which ends in the establishment of intellectuals' professional practice (working with words) as being the very essence of a locked battle with the "fascism of language." The Eastern dissident intellectuals are only dissidents insofar as their struggle against the power that oppresses their people causes them to renounce their status, to lose their jobs and modes of expression as "normal" intellectuals because they have opposed the dominant system of thought in their society. On a more modest scale, the leftism of May '68 demanded that intellectuals prove their "revolutionary" qualifications by attacking the nearest loci of power, beginning with the authority of their own leaders. Today's monopolized dissidence however, is adorned with all the prestige of the intellectual.

The turnabout is most striking where relations with the media are concerned. The dissidents in the East bend all their efforts toward creating a new public opinion in a society atomized by the dominant, monopolistic system of ideology. Today the pop intelligentsia who have invaded the media use strange arguments. According to them, any criticism of the media signifies contempt for "ordinary people" to whom television addresses itself, while truty is allegedly reserved for consumption by elite circles only. Surely a publication's confidential character does not depend on its author, but rather on those who control the means of disseminating the spoken and written word. When André Glucksmann was analyzing the roots of a "new fascism" in Pompidou's France, his style was no more esoteric than it is today and what he had to say was of concern to just as many people, yet the television screens were not open for him to talk about Thévenin or Djellali. Now that he has recently denounced the Gulag and the master thinkers in a public broadcast, the media are wide open for him; but when he wants to let certain persons speak who might cause trouble for French diplomacy, the forum is

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open only conditionally. As in the past, the monopolies of communication continue today to inform "ordinary people" only of those truths which do not disturb our state.

The self-justification of the thought-master still comes through clearly in the midst of the avowed urgency of struggle. *"I am simply rebelling,"* says Bernard-Henri Lévy, *"against the curious idea that an intellectual must keep silent until he has completed long years of research and laborious study."* In other words, the urgency of the fights against capitalist or socialist barbarism excuses intellectuals from spending time studying the reality of its functioning? But what is meant here by "intellectual?" If the title does not belong to him by virtue of his acquired knowledge of the questions he discusses, then it can only be based on social position: yesterday, university accreditation; today, a position in the publishing business—in short, social status. Substitute the word "worker" or "peasant" for "intellectual" in Lèvy's remarks, and they become evidently absurd. No one takes a non-intellectual's word for anything unless it represents experience or knowledge. The dominant ideological structure is especially interested in a non-intellectual's testimony when, at the end of his life, it can provide a chronicle of some kind of anti-hero (X mediocre worker, or Y besotted peasant). Such individuals are given the right to speak because they can offer "exclusive" social knowledge but even more because they have *spent more years of their lives working and keeping their mouths shut.* It should be added that their testimony will be the better received, the less they have resisted (or the more ordinary they have remained) and the less they have presumed to think. This inverted situation leads to the thought that perhaps the substance of the rights claimed here by intellectuals consists of nothing more than the absence of others' rights.

Now just what is this urgency which would justify hastiness? When torture in Algeria was being condemned, only the fascists demanded to know how much time their accusers had spent verifying all their testimony. But when it is question of fighting against a "barbarism" which is simply capital, itself no more than the "historical unfurling of the Western world," such haste quickly becomes suspect. Are not these anti-barbaric urgencies, this bare-handed struggle of the new anti-Marxist thinkers, simply the reverse of the Marxist Althusser's "class struggle in theory?" We have here a simple inversion of a postulate formulated in the same terms: those who attribute all of socialism's ills to the fact of not having read the texts properly are answered by those who attribute the trouble to their having been read too well. This diagnostic inversion justifies the professor's power, whether the latter bases his argument on "the builders of socialism" or on the victims of the Gulag. If the thought-masters are the cause of our failure to resist the Gulag, then criticizing their books counts as militant action, but at the same time such criticism excuses its authors from doing any more research on the real roots of the participation and subjection of millions of human beings in the horrors of concentrated power. In short, the intellectual saves the militant work, and vice versa. The more so since, as books become progressively sanctified, the text is treated in an ever more cavalier fashion. In the art of making Marx say what he never said ("symptomal reading"), today's anti-Marxists remain true to their Marxist elders. Hence, Lévy finds, in Marx's own text, the "admission" (which conforms to Lévy's thesis) that the proletariat is nonexistent and exists only through theoretical sleight of hand ("We must form a class with radical chains. . ."). Assuredly, this is a very famous text and yet it can't be found, for this imperative over which Lévy is so exercised has been produced by the translator alone.

Glucksmann, on the other hand, is more radical when he is called upon to

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demonstrate against all evidence that Marx legitimizes the state as being the opposite of private property. The impossibility of furnishing the slightest proof is what provides him with the supreme proof: "The chapter on the state, though originally projected, is, as if by accident, missing from *Capital*." A well-known bit of Stalinist logic: the best proof that people are guilty is that there is no proof. For if there is no proof, it is because they have done away with the evidence, and if they have done away with it, it means they're guilty. This is the reason, as everyone knows, why a true saboteur never engages in sabotage.

Herein lies the ultimate paradox: the very ones who claim to speak for the resistance against Marxist domination take up the implicatory rhetoric of its repression. Or, rather, the stated Marxist's critique, not content with following the same procedures as "scientific" Marxism, in one sense ends up completing the effect: it is as though this critique, which ought to draw for us the lessons of a half-century of Marxist oppression, actually serves to reinforce that which gives Marxist dogma its force. The young philosophers' "I say that..." bears the indelible imprint of the words of the master—whether Marxist, Leninist, or Maoist—and partakes of the pure terrorism of Stalinist proclamations. In passing from the intellectual scholar-turned-revolutionary to the intellectual as professional dissident, I don't think the system has been changed. And I fail to see how the Eastern dissidents are being helped or how their cause is being carried to a wider world by conforming one's thought to the dominant mode of publication, which in this way is being reinforced, through the intelligentsia, by the combined power of the old mandarin system and the new commercial power. Anyone who, in doing this, sincerely believes that they are working for liberty will be forced to admit to the need for clarifying the relationship between intellectuals and militants, between power and truth, between promotion campaigns for books and campaigns for the defense of freedom. Meanwhile they will have established, at the intersection of the verbal authority of universities and that of politics, as well as between the machinery of the state and that of the market, new forms of power which are destined to prosper.

In the face of such a probable future, it is imperative that those unresigned intellectuals who are unwilling to lend their voices to the language of state or business organize other forms, other spheres of intellectual expression and circulation; that they allow themselves the time, far from the edifices of intellectual power and commercial thought, to study that which they are discussing. They must be quick to listen to words coming from outside; they must keep in mind that free thought is not an attribute of their profession but rather is the product of all those deliberate discontinuities which tear away an oppressive order.

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SEVENTEEN LATIN PROVERBS: NOTES ON SOCIALIST PLANNING AND ITS DISCONTENTS

by Hop Jan

Mala Fide

In a note added to the 1782 edition of *The Social Contract,* Rousseau interpreted Machiavelli's *The Prince* in an unusual way: "Machiavelli was a gentleman and a good citizen; but being attached to the house of Medici, he was forced during the oppression of his country to disguise his love of liberty. The very choice of an execrable hero reveals his secret intentions, and the antithesis between his principles in his book *The Prince* and those in his *Discourses on Livy* and *The History of Florence* proves that this profound political thinker has so far had only superficial or corrupted readers. The Pope's court strictly prohibited his book, which I can well believe, since that was the court he depicts most plainly."

This is an inviting interpretation! *Se non è vero, è bene trovato.* I propose the following task: A manual should be written "for" the planner who works within the framework of "market socialism." The entries could read as follows:

1. Write long reports, from two to three thousand pages, so that you can be sure nobody can read them in their entirety. If the client (an administrator) reacts negatively to this, which he is unlikely to do since he does not need the study or plan anyway, prepare for him a short excerpt with an emphasis on the least comprehensible part of the original text. Stress that all the important things can be found in the original report, which is an indivisible whole, etc.

2. Stress that everything you do is scientifically based, and be sure that the less understandable the study or plan is, the more scientific it will appear. (An abundant use of illegible mathematical formulas is recommended in this respect. To the layman, mathematics always appears scientific.) The client wants to legitimate his objectives through your work, and he knows that the adjective "scientific" works wonders on his constituency.

3. The study or plan you are to make should be very expensive. The more expensive it is, the more secure you are from criticism, since the administrator who ordered it puts himself in jeopardy if a very expensive study or plan turns out to be worthless. He is your best ally in that case. Furthermore, expensive things generally appear to be of higher quality.

4. If the study or plan you produced is of poor quality, your competitors will not attack you seriously since they live off the same bread. They will concentrate upon technicalities, avoiding all the substantive shortcomings. For the same reason, you must not attack their work substantively. This may start an utterly unnecessary "war" between you and them whereby both risk overexposing the secrets of your trade.

5. If you are asked to make a study or plan, insist on the longest possible time horizon, since that way you will be able to avoid all the difficulties associated with dealing with present problems. After all, the administrator who hires you has essentially the same objective. He will tend to avoid or postpone action by ordering a study or plan.

6. In the acknowledgements implicate as many "authorities" as possible. That helps divert criticism, or at least distribute the blame for failure. All potential critics should be involved in your work in some way.

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7. Furnish the introduction and the conclusion of your reports with abundant quotations from Marxist classics. The words "self-government" and "working people" should also be used as often as possible. Do not attempt to link these expressions logically with the content of the text, since that is by no means necessary. All that is required is a pledge of allegiance.

8. The larger a meeting of people who are supposed to review your work, the better for you. A large group is much easier to manipulate than a small one (especially if it is *a priori* neutral toward you). In addition, the larger the group that accepted your work, the more secure the legitimation they provide.

9. Do everything possible to protract the meeting to the physiological limits of the participants, while keeping all of your key arguments for the moment when their will is weakened by long and fruitless discussion. Meanwhile, you should do everything possible to exhaust the participants by directing them toward superfluous complications. It should be added that for all these reasons, you should attempt to schedule meetings for the end of the working day.

10. For such meetings, you should prepare all the required material as late as possible, and take these to the meeting itself rather than distributing them beforehand. That way you make adequate preparation of the participants impossible.

Etcetera, etcetera. I only wonder who would prohibit such a manual?

September 21, 1976

Note: This extension does not concern my proposal, but only the interpretation provided by Rousseau. Gramsci (*The Modern Prince*) goes much further. He argues that Machiavelli had something else in mind, but he shows that this was not simply to expose the technique of politics used by the "execrable" rulers. Machiavelli provided a political manifesto for the people of Italy, and simultaneously explicated the method that must be followed if Italy is to be unified on the basis of "collective will." As Gramsci put it, "Machiavelli himself notes that the things he is writing are applied, and have always been applied by the greatest man in history; it does not seem, therefore, that he wants to advise those who already know... We can therefore suppose that Machiavelli had in view those who do not know, that he intended to give political education to those who do not know, not a negative education of hatred for tyrants..., but a positive education of those who must recognize certain necessary means, even if those of tyrants, because they want certain ends... Who then does not know? The revolutionary class of the time, the Italian people and nation... It can be considered that Machiavelli wanted to persuade these forces of the necessity for a leader, who would know what he wanted and how to obtain it and to accept him with enthusiasm even if his actions might be or appear to be contrary to the widely held ideology of the time, religion." And Gramsci concludes: "This position of Machiavelli is repeated for Marxism."

Does not this interpretation invalidate my own proposal, however? Does it not expose it as an expression of crude cynicism, and nothing else? Only to some extent. In connection with some other notes of mine, in which an argument is made for the revolutionary purpose of planning under socialism, this note does appear in a different light. Still, it must be admitted that this note is quite ambiguous in this respect. Nevertheless, Grasmci's essay cannot be used as the criterion for the critique of this ambiguity, since his concept of rationality tends to be too unambiguous for the point of view of our experiences with totalitarian and authoritarian rule. This ambiguity,

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exposed quite thoroughly by Horkheimer and Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) and Marcuse (e.g., *Negations*), does not even appear in Gramsci's interpretation. The best example of this is his pragmatic acceptance of the position that "there do in fact exist rulers and ruled" as an axiom, "given things as they are." The future is left to the future.

May 15, 1977

Quo Animo?

It is necessary to raise the question of social classes and strata in connection with self-government *as* social planning. When we deal with "the working people" in general we run the risk of organizing reactionary forces. We have no instruments to deal with such forces if we are not allowed to see "the working people" as a stratified phenomenon. By not accepting the potential conflicts beforehand, we make actual conflicts much more difficult to deal with when they actually surface.

Self-government, as presently conceived in Yugoslavia, is not selective in the above sense. It therefore is not a weapon of class struggle, but an instrument that may well dull and confuse it. Self-government organs harbor a great proportion of people who are not concerned with *socialism,* but with *democracy.* Socialism implies a different form and content of democracy, which by definition does not permit the generalization of freedom. Paradoxically, if one sharpens the issues of social stratification, one appears to be limiting the basis of self-government. Actually, this basis must be limited if one is concerned with the development of *socialist* self-government.

October 30, 1976

Plaudite, Cives!

So many changes, so many reforms, characteristic of Yugoslavia, hardly conceal the lack of any real change. As Giuseppe di Lampedusa (*The Leopard*) put it: "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. D'you understand?" Actually, the change conceals the haphazard groping of the power-structure, always trying to hide behind the scenes, to be invisible, even though its bulky body shows so well regardless of where it hides.

The change always comes from above, as a gift from the Heavens, as the benevolence of our Fathers. . . Where is the locus of change, of the continuous tumult? Who demands it and why? Who is responsible for the consequences of proposed reforms as well as for the situation that supposedly demands these reforms?

The League of the Communists must be visible and its role explicit! It must play a role that is widely understood. It must be an understandable source of the movement of the whole society. However, a precondition for this is that the internal struggle is sufficiently developed. Factions must be visible! Their purposes must be clear to the masses. The struggle between the factions must be understandable to the masses, because the masses must be involved in these struggles directly. Only that way can they stop being simply "the masses."

November 3, 1976

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Intelligenti Pauca

What matters the most about an article in a bureaucratic world is *where* it is published, its *location* in a particular book or journal, and its *length* (at least, its relative length). The content is usually of least consequence. There are, naturally, many ways of fighting this bureaucratic idiocy. *Formally*, I choose as a weapon the short essay and short note. A ray of sharp light on an aspect of a problem, and nothing else. No attempt to finish-up every thought, to quote every authority, to consider seriously every angle, every possible extension, every possible implication... That tends to deaden an occasional critical spark that may be buried somewhere. I will let my short pieces live their own lives, let them spur the unexpected thoughts I had not even considered, but which were hidden in my careless sentences, let them excite that which I thought could not be excited, hoping I was wrong... I will let my short pieces be short indeed. That way, I am sure, I will secure for them the worst place, the worst position in a hierarchy (or, is it *the* hierarchy?), since it seems that length and content are to some extent related. The content does seem to matter after all, quite the contrary to my original assumption.

November 8, 1976

Note: Is not an intelligent reader bound to ask, after reading these notes, whether the most appropriate title of this note was not: *Aquila non captat muscas?* What would I answer, seeing his or her ironic smile?

Vis Maior

The contradiction between "planned economy" and "market economy" (Sohn-Rethel), characteristic of monopoly capitalism, reflects itself in the contradiction between two sectors of the capitalist state: the sector that blindly regulates the anarchy of the market *via* monetary and financial instruments, and the sector that attempts to link various sectors of the economy into a system *via* central planning organized in accordance with the principles developed in the sphere of "planned economy." This is an aspect of the contradiction between the plan and market, that is, between the state-regulated sector and the private sector of the economy. Stephen S. Cohen (*Modern Capitalist Planning: The French Model*) provides empirical evidence substantiating the above argument. He writes about the contradiction between the long-term regulation of the Planning Commission and the short-term regulation of the Ministry of Finance (the Treasury) in France: "Interviews with Treasury officials, businessmen, informed observers of French planning and the planners themselves yielded unanimous judgments: short-term economic policy was not deliberately used as an instrument to implement the plan; the implementation of the plan was only a marginal consideration to the Government and the Treasury when day-to-day economic decisions were made. It was repeatedly emphasized not only that short-term policy was not used deliberately and systematically for the purpose of implementing the detailed programs of the plan, but that quite often the main trends in economic policy were in contradiction with even the broadest outlines of the plan." It should be borne in mind that French planning is one of the most popular models of capitalist planning. According to Cohen, "The British study and imitate the French Plan. American city and regional planners draw models of it. Eastern European economists continually visit the Planning Commission's offices in Paris, and the European Left thinks it significant enough to view it as a paradigm model of post-war European capitalism."

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This contradiction, inherent in the production of commodities, cannot be dissolved by more and better planning. It can only be exacerbated by planning, as was demonstrated by Sohn-Rethel for the corporate level of the economy.

December 7, 1976

Gloria Victis!

The following two results of Braverman's analysis in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* should be extended to cover (professional) planning: 1. *abstract labor* has been realized in actual capitalist planning *via* the methods of "scientific management" (the dissolution of *concrete labor*), and 2. *manual labor* gradually "replaces" *mental labor* (the proletarianization of the lower strata of the so-called white-collar labor). The two processes are closely related. In the universal process of dissolution of concrete labor, the lower strata of those who are engaged in mental labor are concomitantly dissolved.

Modern planning techniques similarly displace an ever larger population of planners into the administration *via* routinized planning procedures. These are based on the translation of mental procedures into organizational systems. The introduction of the computer into the administration creates man-machine systems increasingly analogous to those already in existence in the sphere of material production. Planning becomes administration, and planners turn into glorified manual workers dealing with fragmented and routinized information processing procedures. That is what Horkheimer and Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) called "Taylorism of the mind." Specific individuals are increasingly interchangeable, and their work is increasingly mechanized, to the point of replacement by the machine. The road toward total control of social processes, analogous to the control of natural processes, has already been paved. Ironically, it has been paved with the bodies of those who traced it.

December 22, 1976

Clavus Clavo Eicitur

1. Most of our friends, the critics and critical critics, never ask the following essential questions:

—what is the *material vehicle* of radical change at the *present* stage of development of socialist societies; and

—what are the social consequences of the changes brought about by the development of the *material basis* of social life in terms of *revolutionary* changes.

The question of the gap between the ideals and reality is always dealt with in an abstract, moral or legal fashion. The material vehicle and the nature of the process of transcendence (*vis-à-vis* the nature of the contradictions characterizing these societies) are left out. It is time we saw the socialist societies as they are, from the standpoint of our own experiences. It is time we thought about the consequences of our blindness.

2. Most of our friends, the critics and critical critics, are willing to discuss *ad nauseum* whether the so-called socialist societies are indeed socialist or not, whether they were born out of truly socialist revolutions, etc. They shy away from the possibility, inherent in the acceptance of these countries as socialist, that communism, or even further stages of socialist development, require *revolutions*, and not peaceful evolutionary processes whereby the state withers away. Is it not conceivable to speak of this process of withering away of the state as a sequence of revolutions, limited in

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character, where the destructive effects of social revolutions would be reduced by the increasingly clear objectives of the revolutionary strata? No revolutions accomplish their tasks completely, without slipping back to some extent.

3. The stability, or irreversibility, of a revolution depends on a large number of factors that can be provisionally grouped into three broad categories:

—the degree of correspondence of the social relations and social forces of production;

—the range and depth (extensive and intensive dimensions) of social restructuring; and

—the external influences: (a) balance of forces between the two blocs; (b) accumulated socialist experience; (c) degree of integration of the socialist bloc; etc.

Either some tasks of a revolution *remain* undone, or the accomplished *becomes* undone. In both cases it is too easy to postulate these tasks as merely *desirable*. The question is *how* to accomplish these tasks. We seldom ask this question seriously, limiting ourselves to abstract moralism concerned solely with what *ought* to be done.

A successful revolution may degenerate under the influence of the above factors. The most dramatic case is that of the total breakdown of the new social order—a counter-revolution. But a whole spectrum of less dramatic processes is conceivable. We are used to thinking about revolutions as true-false propositions. This is obviously ideologically advantageous to the newly established regimes. That way all the discontent is automatically branded as counter-revolutionary, and the progressive opponents easily confused and pacified. In a highly dynamic situation the new regime thus introduces stability. Revolutions, or at least popular revolts, may thus be possible and even necessary at certain stages of this potential decay or stagnation.

4. Also, a clear distinction must be made between the material preconditions for a socialist revolution and the material preconditions for its *realization*.

The contradiction between social relations and social forces of production may appear after the socialist revolution in the inverted form. The social relations of production may become too advanced in relation to the given level and rate of development of the social forces of production. This will necessarily result in backsliding, which would appear as counter-revolutionary movement. Political revolutions that would intend to stop this process may also appear as counter-revolutionary, since these revolutions would scale down the social relations of production in accordance with the social forces of production. Too advanced social relations of production may act in an inhibitive way on the development of the social forces of production. Hence the danger of ultra-leftism.

5. These and related questions must be discussed freely. The acknowledgement of the existence of Party factions would certainly make this process less violent. The differences, which exist today, would be aired openly, without producing the social shocks represented by palace revolutions or bloody popular revolts. Party factions are necessary if secret societies within the Party itself are to be avoided. But can factions be introduced peacefully? A revolution may be necessary to introduce this sort of feature into Party life.

February 3, 1977

Non Nova, Sed Nove

Commodity, capital, money, labor, etc., are reified social relations. As such they are reflected in the categories of political economy. Planning is not a new category of

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political economy, but an *extension* of the above categories. New categories are formed by appending "planning" to the old ones. Planning is a social relation only *via* commodity, capital, money, labor, etc., as a step further in the reification and ossification of these social relations. Since one of the most important functions of planning is to stabilize social relations, it can only be one more link in the mediation of society and nature, man and society, man and man, etc. All these forms of planning, which are actually different forms of *capital planning*, concentrate in the hands of the management hierarchy. Planning, as a reified social relation, is thus personified by the management. The capitalist, as the personification of capital, a material form of a social relation, practically disappears from the scene. Capital planning is now personified by the management. It follows that capitalist planning is not *direct* regulation of the social process of production, but an even more *indirect* mode of regulation than was the case with the indirect regulation *via* things (i.e., commodity production). Commodity production is not abolished; it itself is mediated.

February 23, 1977

Caveat

Social planning is the continuation of the socialist revolution by peaceful means. What, then, is the market (read: commodity production)? The continuation of the counter-revolution by peaceful means. Social planning is, first of all, the restructuring of the social relations of production, while the market is their conservation. But, can permanent revolution be a meaningful concept without permanent counter-revolution? Certainly it cannot. To deny the existence of the market or, on the other hand, to deny its essentially counter-revolutionary character, is to confuse and disorient socialist development. The revolutionary character of social planning will, as a consequence, be denied as well. It will be conceived as mere technique, as social engineering, and it will be left to the mercy of the professionals.

But this also implies that not just any planning can serve this function. Revolutions cannot be fought for us. We must be involved directly. The same applies to planning. We must be involved in social planning directly. The opening up of the social process of planning is thus one of the central accomplishments of the socialist revolution.

April 25, 1977

Sum Quod Eris

One of the most disquieting functions of planning is to preserve the present, to deflect change, to channel the future along the lines of the present. Also, to glorify the present by reflecting its image in the mirror of the future bliss. Its function is to provide a consistent and comprehensive picture of the present's capacity for self-reproduction. This very consistency and this very comprehensiveness is calculated to defuse any attempt of providing a different future based on the critique of the present. A projection of the present into the future is much more powerful than the present itself, since it provides a more or less well defined place for all of us. We are lured to the comfortable security of the world for the realization of which there is just one condition: our inactivity.

May 4, 1977

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Volenti Nil Impossibile

1. The label "bureaucratic voluntarism" is often used in bureaucratic self-criticism (where, naturally, the critic and the criticized are distinct). Let us examine in some detail the reasons for this. One of the most interesting aspects of this label is the implication of bureaucratic omnipotence. This implication is buried in the very concept of deviating will (where this deviation is conceived as a departure from the established line of behavior, ideological position, etc.). In the Socialist countries this implication has another important consequence: it tends to deny the existence of the objective laws of social development. This especially applies to the remnants of the market (read: commodity production), and to the operation of the Law of Value, however modified by administrative intervention and planning. If the deviation is defined as the departure from the objective laws of social development, a *contradictio in adjecto* results. If a sphere of freedom, resulting from the intersection of planning and market, for example, is postulated, voluntarism disappears. If the existence of the deviation is accepted, the existence of this freedom is denied. That is, all the roads are already charted on the basis of something else. What else? Another, distinct, brand of voluntarism?

2. But, let us return to the objective laws. It is obvious that all the administrative intervention that a socialist party-state apparatus can muster is not sufficient to steer a society along the previously charted course of development if these objective laws steer it in another direction. When a deviation is detected, *post festum*, the existence of these laws cannot but be denied, since the previously charted course of development was supposedly based on such laws. These supposed laws must be defended, and the label of voluntarism must find a victim. Thus the existence of objective laws is denied *via facti*, regardless of the explicit statements to the contrary. Voluntarism breeds voluntarism.

3. Under the assumption that the objective laws of social development indeed exist, we arrive at the question of their interpretation, *ex ante* and *ex post*. We arrive at the question of democracy. For voluntarism is based on the uncontested objectivity of those who interpret the objective laws.

May 5, 1977

Note: An interesting example from Yugoslav practice may illuminate some aspects of bureaucratic voluntarism already mentioned. Professor Horvat demonstrated in his *Business Cycles in Yugoslavia* that "the cycles of the economy and of lawmaking activity are differentiated from each other in phase, so that 'bad' years in Parliament correspond to good years in the economy and *vice versa*." Business cycles and "administrative cycles" are inseparable. In the preface to his book, Horvat points out that prior to this study, the existence of business cycles was not recognized in Yugoslavia; he also points out that his discovery did not provoke the interest of the Administration. It was simply ignored. Bureaucratic voluntarism, which often hides behind "self-government voluntarism," will always tend to deny such discoveries, either by implicitly asserting its self-sufficiency in the interpretation of economic laws, or by implicitly denying the very existence of such laws. Bureaucratic arrogance and ignorance will reinforce each other. Hiding behind self-government organs, the bureaucracy disposes of the need to find those responsible for policy failures. Nobody is responsible since everybody is responsible. Apparent political freedom only hides the

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real freedom of the bureaucracy, the real freedom from social control of the political process.

May 15, 1977

Horror Vacui

Self-government turns into its opposite when propagated by an authoritarian regime. It spreads the power of the regime to all the nooks and crannies of society, it fills every empty space, every remaining sphere of freedom. It is a sign of the regime's powerlessness, of the panic that slowly creeps along the backbones of those on top. But, this fear of the uncontrolled, and the resulting spread of the tips of government over the whole social body, eventually suffocate the increasingly remote center. The question is what happens then? To what uses can the increasingly autonomous apparatus of power be put? By whom? *Horror vacui* at the top then threatens to reproduce itself at the bottom of the social hierarchy. A powerful center is then wished back.

May 5, 1977

Beati Pauperes Spiritu

There is nothing more deceptive than common sense, or the sense of the common. Listen to Rousseau's (*The Social Contract*) ode to common sense, to his glorification of vulgar democracy (or is it the democracy of the vulgar?): "Upright and simple men are difficult to deceive precisely because of their simplicity; strategems and clever arguments do not prevail upon them; they are not indeed subtle enough to be dupes."

But the problem is simply dislocated: "upright and simple men" can most easily be duped by simple and vulgar arguments, which they are not subtle enough to recognize as intrinsically subtle. Rousseau's argument is daily contradicted by real political practice.

Still, Rousseau provides a key for understanding an aspect of manipulation. And this has immediate relevance to planning as well. Only consider the abominable form in which social plans are published in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. A dull mass of disconnected assertions, prescriptions, instructions... A dull mass of numbers, percentages, indices... Understandable in detail, but lacking any unifying structure. And all in the name of the people!

May 6, 1977

Felix Culpa

The most important role of the professional planner in Yugoslavia today is to propagate the impression that planning indeed exists. It is in his professional interest to spread this lie. Only the most naive among the professional planners risk their lives to implement their plans. They still do not understand that they are biting the hand that feeds them.

May 7, 1977

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Ridentem Dicere Verum

An architect and an urbanist quarreled about the primacy of their professions. At one point the architect said: "When God created the world, he created order out of chaos; therefore, he was an architect." The urbanist exclaimed: "Yes, but who created the chaos?" (By the way, I heard this story in the Soviet Union. Moreover, it corresponded perfectly to what I saw there.)

May 7, 1977

Credo Quia Absurdum

1. We can provisionally agree with Horkheimer and Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*) that "terror and civilization are inseparable," since "What could bring men to develop in such a way that they are able to master more complex stimuli in a positive manner, but tie up their own development with a hard effort to overcome outside resistance? The resistance is first embodied in the father, and later on dissolves into a thousand different forms: the schoolmaster, the superior, the customer, the competitor, the representatives of social and governmental forces. Their brutality stimulates individual spontaneity." Furthermore, they conclude that "it is impossible to abolish the terror and maintain civilization. Even a lessening of terror implies a beginning of the process of dissolution."

2. The pair of opposites, terror and civilization, seems to be ill-defined, however. First, terror is conceived as resistance, that is, as a passive obstacle. The active side is missing. Second, as a consequence of this, the resistance to terror is lost from the picture. Civilization is an interplay of these two moments, each of which has a two-fold nature. Terror cannot be separated from civilization as its opposite, but can only be inseparably linked with it. The other aspect, which is only mentioned by Horkheimer and Adorno, is individual spontaneity and its collective forms.

3. Where does planning fit into this framework? As is the case with all intellectuals regardless of their pronouncements, the professional planner is caught between terror and spontaneity, the two vital components of civilization. The distinction between planning "from above" and that "from below" is not helpful in this connection, since those below are capable of both terror and resistance to it, as well as spontaneity and resistance to that. The professional planner is incapable of making up his mind, of joining either the oppressors or the oppressed. He is a tragi-comic representative of both, because he knows that his spontaneity and terror are inseparable.

May 8, 1977

Factum Fieri Nequit Inefectum

When a taboo is imposed, people first stop doing what is prohibited, then stop writing about it, then talking about it, thinking about it, and finally even being conscious of both what is prohibited and the taboo itself. It becomes painful to hear anyone mention it, and a hostile reaction sets in to any trace of it. This hostility is temporarily the best ally of those who imposed the taboo. An ever larger number of people demands that the taboo be rigorously enforced. Taboos multiply in number and intensity. Hostility spreads, it becomes generalized. Fear and apathy without reason and purpose pervade every aspect of social life. The social fabric disintegrates. Almost anything can then turn into a spark, threatening to ignite unreflected destruction.

May 16, 1977

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FROM STREET THEATRE TO MEDITATION: INTERNATIONAL THEATRE WORKSHOP IN BERGAMO

by Russell Berman

Legend has it that the comic figure Arlecchino came from Bergamo, an old cultural center near Milan. Here, too, is the birthplace of Pope John XXIII. Given this historical setting, it was perhaps inevitable that the International Workshop of Group Theatre held here from August 28 to September 6 oscillated between religion and farce. With the funding and prestigious support of the International Theatre Institute and UNESCO, Eugenio Barba, director the Danish Odin Theatre and one of the theoretical chieftains of the group theatre movement, collected a very mixed bag of troupes and performers from Europe, Asia and North and South America. Presentations were devoted primarily to demonstrations of technique and training, with occasional films (dances and trances in Bali, Peter Brooks in Africa) and a handful of more or less complete performances. The quality of the many participating groups varied widely, and because few had the opportunity to offer thorough explanations or unabridged preformances, it would be unfair to discuss them individually. Furthermore their backgrounds, i.e., the context of their regular work, simply cannot be reduced to one common denominator. Only the National *Geographic* would attempt to present the Cardiff Liberation Theatre, Cuatrotablas from Peru and Bergamo's own Teatro Tascabile side by side. Nevertheless the sparse theoretical introductions, Barba's lectures and the whole tenor of the workshop were characterized by an odd sense of unity, a not very subliminal ideology which warrants close examination as a step in the demise of the angry political street theatre of the sixties.

The rallying cry of the theoreticians in Bergamo was the "third theatre," a nebulous term rarely given a concrete content. Rather it represents, as Barba argues in his manifesto, a "theatrical archipelago," of isolated groups outside the official realms of traditional (first) and avant-guarde (second) theatre. "It seems to constitute the anonymous extreme of the theatres recognized by the world of culture: on the one hand, institutionalized theatre, protected and subsidized because of the cultural values that it seems to transmit, appearing as a living image of a creative confrontation with the texts of the past and the present—or even as a "noble" version of the entertainment business; on the other hand, the avant-garde theatre, experimenting, researching, arduous or iconoclastic, a theatre of changes, in search of a new originality, defended in the name of the necessity to transcend tradition, and open to novelty in the artistic field and within society." Thus the third theatre rejects the traditional conservative theatre as well as theatre which attempts to undermine those traditions and overcome that conservatism. In fact, from Barba's vantage point, the avant-garde is simply a reformist continuation of the theatre of the past. Shakespeare or Albee, Molière or Beckett, Lessing or Brecht—the differences are negligible once one recognizes that the possibility of heroic radicalism lies elsewhere. "The third theatre lives on the fringe, often on the outside or on the outskirts of the centers and capitals of culture. It is a theatre created by people who define themselves as actors, directors, theatre workers, although they have seldom undergone a traditional theatrical education and therefore are not recognized as professionals. But they are not amateurs. Their entire day is filled with theatrical experience, sometimes by what they call training, or by the preparation of performances for which they must fight to

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find an audience." Certainly theatre—and Western art in general—is in a historical situation where not only its contours but its very possibility as well has become questionable. Traditional aesthetic categories certainly create as many problems as they solve. Yet Barba is beyond struggling with these issues. "The abstract divisions, made arbitrarily and instituted from on high—various schools, styles, tendencies and other lables which bring order to the recognized theatre—can be of no use here." The Gordian knot of contemporary aesthetics needs neither to be unravelled nor slashed if one is willing to hide from the present in a collective introversion. The third theatre's self-proclaimed courageous marginality is nothing but a fear of confronting the concrete problems which no art form escapes in contemporary society. Because the third theatre ignores the problematic heritage of traditional and critical drama, a theoretical vacuum develops with a series of unfortunate consequences. These consequences, these failures are more characteristic of the third theatre than its minimal technical successes. Not surprisingly, these failures parallel the decline of other residues of the New Left, for which a radical leap outside the system only led to impoverishment and self-delusion.

Rejecting the challenges of the theoretical tradition, the third theatre is left stranded in a solipsism which burgeons into a pathetic do-your-own-thing subjectivism. Barba is very clear on this point: "...these groups can only survive on two conditions: either by entering the circle of established theatre, accepting the laws of supply and demand, conforming to fashionable tastes, giving way to the preferences of political and cultural ideologists, and adapting themselves to the latest acclaimed results; or by succeeding through continuous work to individualize their own area, seeking what for them is essential and trying to force the others to respect this diversity." Social mediations are viewed as simply the arbitrary proclamations of dictatorial critics which one can just as well ignore. Instead one simply expresses oneself, one's inner being, one's pre-social essence untainted by the world of commerce. Consequently the expression of this essence takes precedence over theatrical communications: the stimulation of the public in the sense of Brecht and Benjamin is disregarded while the actor gives form to his or her inner self on and off the state. "It is as if the personal needs—ideals, fears, multiple impulses which would otherwise remain obscure—wanted to be transformed into work, according to an attitude which from the outside is justified as an ethical imperative, not limited to the profession only, but extending over all of daily life."

This unrestrained cult of subjectivity, which Jean-Jacques Daetwyler has called a search for "an authenticity of life" in the journal *Zomar* (February-March, 1977), lends the third theatre a therapeutic quality: group therapy on stage. It is important meanwhile to underscore that the denigration of communication derives precisely from this self-righteous authenticity and not, as in Adorno's defense of Endgame, from a painful grappling with the difficulties of communication and a recognition of the ideological character of claims of a pre-social authenticity in the world of universal mediation. The third theatre rarely uses words, not because of a crisis of language but because of the alleged superiority of non-verbal communication: vibes instead of verbs. Here too the anti-theoretical mortgage comes due: the fashionable critique of the arbitrary character of traditional and avant-garde categories ends up as the excuse for random emotions simply uninterested in any objective validity of communication or criticism. The half-hearted defense of the third theatre implies its own negation because the emotional display is exponentially more arbitrary than the allegedly arbitrary traditional theatre.

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A second consequence of the curious radicalism of the third theatre is a fetishism of theatrical means. Like the extreme subjectivism, it is part of the do-your-own-thing syndrome of the moribund youth movement, with the emphasis now on the doing. By far the major concern of the Bergamo workshop was technique, and the constant display of technique or training took the place of any reflection of the possibility of meaning or communication. This aspect definitely provides parts of the explanation of Barba's interest in traditional Asian theatre. One of the papers distributed at the workshop states: "...there is something common between the professionalism that characterizes these oriental actors and the working attitude of many theatre groups. An oriental actor works a long time, for many hours, for whole months and years, to achieve a result that can be shown only a few times to the public and in specific situations. Similarly, the groups who work outside the official theatre, mostly have a long process of work that appears to be out of proportion to the amount of results achieved." Gaining skills, in particular training the body and the voice, is the main concern of the theatre groups; it is structurally homologous with the sudden concern with skills—auto repair or legal training—that took hold of the American student movement after its peak in the late 1960s. However, this concern with technique is caught up in the subjectivist matrix, for the training itself takes on a ritualistic character within the theatre group. Barba writes that "...the actor's work is mainly carried out in isolation and anonymously and directed by a professional ethic and by group rules created collectively. This is one of the main points in the tissue formed by the groups that don't refer to a classical tradition nor to the values of artistic originality but form (in a way which is more or less clear, through a sort of collective social presence not intended to produce Culture but which is culture itself, i.e., an accumulation of experiences) their personal history and an identity that reveals itself to the outside world not only through the performance but also through the personal relationships, the way of behaving that rules the internal life of the group and which concretely translates the position that each of the various components takes toward the surrounding reality." The subjectivity that is supposed to express itself through technique is too weak to master the means and becomes subject to a self-imposed discipline. One of the memorable moments at Bergamo was the open training of a Japanese group, replete with authoritarian master and subordinate pupils, during which the fetishism of technique simply meant the constant humiliation of the technically inferior. This is indicative of one of the central contradictions in the third theatre. The search for expression of authenticity leads to technical concerns that displace the subjectivity itself. Theatrical ability is collapsed into rigorous gymnastics. Barba is not unaware of this problem. Interviewed by the Danish journal *Rampelyset* in January 1977, he commented: "Every form of physical or intellectual technique is a step towards greater freedom. But if this technique is not surpassed, it becomes a sort of colonization. To commit oneself to a new technique is like trying to decolonize oneself, but with the risk of a new form of colonization. All those who cling to technique wither, suffocate their personal sources that decide their own commitment, their personal 'say,' their social presence." Barba recognizes how the weight of technique may hinder the expression of a delicate interiority, but his solution is simply to change horses. When one technique is used up, simply pick another. The relationship between "personal say" and theatrical form seems in the end fully arbitrary. This of course is only part of the fetishism of technique which is imbued with a life of its own, unrelated to the actor, to history or to society.

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The critique of the third theatre's overwhelming concern with technique should by no means be understood as a recapitulation of the realist attacks on formalism. The point is not to ask the theatre bluntly to use its technique to illustrate some message; critical consciousness cannot be grafted onto the exterior of any medium. On the contrary, it must develop from within by way of a criticism of the medium itself. The radical leap away from the theatrical heritage into an unquestionable authenticity makes this very criticism impossible, however. Consequently, techniques appear as foreign means which one can play with like toys in a box. This has little to do with the constant questioning and reexamination of form in the mainstream theatrical tradition where modes of expression grew old in new historical situations and thus appeared antiquated to a critical aesthetic consciousness.

A third characteristic of the third theatre is, appropriately enough, a third-worldism. In the vacuum created by the rejection of conservative and critical Western traditions, a fascination with a variety of oriental performances springs up. The issue here is not primarily a critique of the Indian, Japanese and Balinese theatre, but rather of the escapist intellectual posture which claims that the crisis of the European tradition can be solved by a potpourri of Asian religions in diluted form. This too is of course part of the legacy of the late sixties; Moonies and Maoists alike still look for the star in the East. Too good for the European tradition, the ideologues of the third theatre praise the proficiency and organic character of traditional Asian theatre with all its hierarchy and superstition. Yet there is a deeper connection. The concern with authentic being rather than mediation and transformation points to a static present devoid of emancipatory transcendence. Similarly, the fetishism of technique, of the theatrical material itself without a mature formative consciousness, underscores an aesthetic moment equally present in the Western tradition but subjected there to a constant criticism: the art work as idol, a graven image that neither encourages nor rejects communication. The theatres of Lessing and Diderot, not to mention Brecht, implied transcendence. One can argue that the spectre that has haunted and inspired dramaturgy ever since the enlightment is the possibility of social change: loyalty to the heritage of suffering. The third theatre offers instead a pageantry of colorful sensations, signifying nothing. It suggests only what exists, without even an agnostic inkling of a still indescribable reconciliation.

The street theatre, which seemed to be one of the more creative contributions of the sixties, appears in the from of Barba's third theatre to have lost much of its bite. The operational model of communal grups concerned with individual expression in the context of actual regimentation and undisguised mysticism is unfortunately typical for much of an impatient generation. In this sense Barba ends his manifesto: "One cannot dream only in the future, waiting for a total change which seems farther away at each step we take, and which nevertheless gives free reign to all the alibis, compromises, and to the impotence of waiting. One wants a new cell to be formed immediately but without isolating oneself in it. To submerge oneself, as a group, in the universe of fiction, to find the courage not to pretend. . . such is the paradox of the third theatre." Here the relationship between radical posturing and conservative result is clearest. An uncompromising call for liberation in the present becomes a self-deluding declaration of the present as liberation. An initially political impulse is aestheticized and thereby loses its original content, while the insipid aesthetic result is self-consciously anti-political. An emancipatory theatre will only develop by coming to grips with all the dimensions of its history and not by pretending to be able to forget what even a feigned radicalism cannot escape.

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IN MEMORY OF ERNST BLOCH*

Ernst Bloch, who just passed away in Tübingen, was born in Ludwigsburg in 1885. After studying philosophy, music and physics, he graduated in 1908 with a work dedicated to the philosopher Rickert. In addition, he was a pupil of Simmel and Weber: memories of Simmel's walks after his classes, accompanied by his students Bloch, Lukács and Groethuysen, or the meetings at Weber's house in Heidelberg dominated by his character and his thought, form part of the "legendary" history of European culture.

With the outbreak of the World War I, the idyll of the *grande bourgeoisie* came to an end: Bloch, a confirmed pacifist, found refuge in Switzerland where he wrote a first draft of his *Spirit of Utopia*. Eventually he joined the Communist Party. As Lukács and others, he could not remain unaffaected by the great omen of October: in it, he sought the certainty and hope for breaking out of a desperate world which had lost meaning and in which the individual had become "homeless" as a consequence of the war and the shattering of a whole constellation of allegedly unassailable values. Immediately he found himself confronted with the defeats of the labor movement, Fascism and then Stalinism, while the unexpected Weimar democracy was slowly dying.

Not only had philosophy not been abolished, since it had not been realized, but it inevitably had to return as a means for ordering the real and deciphering events. Here is the root, along with cultural reasons such as the Hebrew matrix of his culture, for the resumption of the utopian theme and hence of a philosophy of history which Hegel had tailored to serve an already fully realized present. Utopia became the guiding thread for rediscovering the meaning of an historical *telos* that, "notwithstanding everything," would re-establish the certainty of a better future for the sake of which the "present state of things" can be criticized: by transcending the existent (and the real), it would shed the fetters of the present and unveil the incomprehensible social hieroglyph of a reified world. "Hegel denies the future: no future will deny Hegel." In this sense, Bloch moved beyond Heine's old legend of a secretly revolutionary Hegel. "Has the separation between the proletariat and philosophy always existed? Is this not true of only a brief lapse in our history when this link is broken...?" Thus, goes *The Principle of Hope*.

With the advent of Nazism, Bloch began a painful emigration through Zurich, Paris, Prague and, finally in 1938, the United States. Since "he had no desire to serve capitalism," at the end of World War II, with Germany split into two states, he accepted an invitation to teach in Leipzig. In 1957, after having been active in the bitter political and philosophical polemics in East Germany following the end of Stalinism and the Hungarian invasion (once more parallel to Lukács), he was accused of "counterrevolutionary activity." In August 1961, after the construction of the Berlin Wall, he never returned to East Germany from a trip to a conference. Thus, the third emigration: from Germany to Germany, from Leipzig to Tübingen. Obstinate critic of bourgeois society and capitalism, he never conceded anything to anti-communism and contributed forcefully through his teaching to the renaissance of critical thought in West Germany.

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The author of many still untranslated works, written in a wild language influenced by expressionism and the ancient Hassidic tradition, Bloch, as Rudi Dutschke once noted, sought radically "to approach the root, man and his everyday dreams" in order to remedy the undeniable fact that "the subjective factor of the emancipatory process in the class struggle has theoretically and practically attracted too little attention."

The following two texts provide a general evaluation of Bloch's work, whose assimilation remains a future task. Habermas's essay appeared under the title "Ein marxistischer Schelling: Zu Ernst Blochs speculativem Materialismus," in *Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt, 1963); that of Negt appeared in the anthology *Keine Demokratie ohne Sozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1976).

A SPECULATIVE MATERIALIST

by Jürgen Habermas

Had we not been intimidated by the generous use made of it by Bloch, we certainly would have chosen the following statement: "Reason cannot flourish without hope, hope cannot speak without reason, both in Marxist unity; no other science has any future, no future another science."

This is one of the few epigrams of an epic thinker who, notwithstanding his *Spuren* and his own inclinations, does not always manifest his force in small dimensions, in aphorisms and parables. Bloch allows himself to be pulled along from the copiousness of thought to the amplitude of narration. The external history of the Leipzig philosopher's voluminous compendium [*The Principle of Hope*], written in the U.S., revised and completed in East Germany and published in full in West Germany, already reflects its internal history: the odyssey of a spirit in the spirit of exodus. Through experiences and errors broods the thought which takes to heart what Jacob Böhme had termed the "brooding in the dark depths of the world." "Nothingness is starving for something," he says, "and hunger is the first want as the first verb is *fiat*."

Bloch follows the same theme when he counterposes hunger, as the first basic drive, to Freud's *libido*. Ever renewed hunger allows man no peace, destines self-preservation to a self-extension and is transformed in its enlightened form into a force generally breaking every fetter of privation. Enlightened hunger, another form of *docta spes*, develops into the decision to abolish all relations in which men vegetate like lost beings. Hunger appears as the elementary energy of hope. Something of that hunger remained stuck to the very work which Bloch dedicates to hope: he is still on the way, from a grandiose systematization of gathered hopes to the system turned toward the hope constituted by reason.

That reason must comprehend (*begreifen*), will certainly be the positivist's objection when he hears that reason could not flourish without hope. Instead, Bloch positively appropriates precisely that which in the face of the positivist principle is probably fragmented in the appearance of improperly posed problems. Like positivism, Bloch also criticizes myths, religions and philosophies as appearances. But he takes them seriously as prefigurations of something which will come about in the future. According to a distinction of modern scientific logic, he preserves the normative element in a certain sense skimmed from the facts, not as an ontological datum, but rather as the realm for the intentional experiences transcending the existent. Bloch does not chastise the hitherto developed philosophy for its lack of courage in avoiding transcendence, but rather for its false consciousness of this: as if, through

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transcendence, it could have disclosed to itself something once or always given. Thus, Aristotle understood substance (*Wesenheit*) as something already existing (*Ge-wesenheit*) and Heidegger understands the absent presence (*abwesendes Anwesen*) of Being as the immanent return of an originally already-existent. Knowing, which from Plato's anamnesis to Freud's analysis seems to follow the movement of a remembrance-like return, also refers in reality to something that is about to arrive and objectively only possible. This demarcates the contours of the *verité à faire*, of a reality to be realized, which "nowhere" is already real, and to that extent is utopian.

Undoubtedly, since the time Thomas More meditating on a *nova insula utopia* gave it its name, utopia has been able to unfold as a concrete utopia to the extent that the analysis of historical development and its moving social forces began to discover the conditions for a possible realization. Bloch does not concern himself with such analysis, simply assuming it to have been accomplished by historical materialism. The greatest danger, which is that of "schemes with a wealth of citations" and "empty-handed practitioners" who betray utopia while engaged in its realization, seems to him to demand the greatest commitment: grasping the very dimension of utopia and imperishably upholding it for posterity.

Bloch wants to preserve for the socialism that lives from the critique of tradition, the tradition of that which is criticized. In the face of the ahistorical procedure of a critique of ideology à la Feuerbach who took away half the meaning of the Hegelian *Aufheben* and indeed was content to *tollere* without *elevare*, Bloch wants to wrench the ideas from ideology, save the true within false consciousness: "All hitherto existing great culture is a prefiguration of something successful to the extent to which this could have been cultivated in images and thoughts on the peaks of time which allow long-range views." Even the critique of religion summed up by Marx in the *Theses on Feuerbach* experiences its retrospection. God is dead, but his "place" has survived him: after the collapse of this hypostasis, the space in which humanity has imagined God and the divinities remains as a cavity whose "deep dimensions" (i.e., atheism as definitively comprehended) bring to light the outline of a future realm of freedom.

"That which culturally surpasses" the truth still ciphered in mythologies is what Bloch seeks to wrench out of the economism of a Marx crushed under *Diamat*, beckoning to a variation on Leibniz who, in turn, had constituted a variation on Locke; there is nothing in the superstructure that is not already in the base, outside of the superstructure itself. A Solomonic orthodoxy, here as everywhere. But not a step backward, as it could probably seem, from Marx to Hegel.

The phenomenology of hope does not follow, if the comparison is permitted, its aged formations as does that of Spirit. Rather, for Bloch, the formations of Spirit bear the objectivity of their appearance from the "experimental validity" of a previously projected new formation. Until now philosophy has not revealed its incognito, the objective possibility of a realm of freedom: "Ultimately, it has always been the cover of Platonic anamnesis over dialectically open *eros* that has cut short all hitherto existing philosophy, including Hegel's, in a contemplative and antiquated manner." Antiquated precisely because of the transformation of something already past into a thing of the future; *contemplative,* in as much as a similar genesis of an end still to come is projected back into the beginning, erroneously reserving to reflection that which, after critical preparation, will have to be accomplished only through responsible praxis... A utopia that conceives of its dialectic of realization once more in a utopian manner is not, however, quite as concrete as it would want us to believe. Perhaps the image of the realm of freedom owes the rigidification of its outlines to the

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exaltation of its initial plan. And this could have its grounds in the type of speculative materialism that excludes speculation from materialism. Once, in a polemic with the young Hegelians' philosophy, Marx set forth the famous proposition that philosophy cannot be realized without its being abolished, in the following manner: it [the young Hegelians' philosophy] takes into consideration only philosophy's critical struggle with the world without considering that "even hitherto existing philosophy belongs to that world and is its complement, even though an ideal one." Bloch concludes from this that the abolition of philosophy refers only to that hitherto existing type and "not to every possible and future one in general." Marx, however, unequivocally asserts the contrary. And, indeed, in the same passage he continues and affirms: the young Hegelians' philosophy relates uncritically toward itself "to the extent that it proceeds on the premises of philosophy and terminates with its resulting data...although the same ones, even though correct, on the contrary can be preserved only through the premises of hitherto existing philosophy, of *philosophy* qua *philosophy*." But the error in Bloch's interpretation is more than this: he suspends mere experimental validation from utopia as well. Because of this, as in *Diamat* in general, the relation of critical philosophy toward science remains unclear. If from the experience of existing contradictions, utopia wants to grasp the practical necessity of their abolition, it has to consent in a double sense to legitimate scientifically the interest which guides knowledge; and that is as a really objective need whose realization is objectively possible. The hypothetical moderation of utopian thought is distinct from speculative thought's consciousness of autonomy. The first considers the philosophical enterprise to be refutable through the scientific analysis of the conditions for its possible realization without, on the contrary, expecting definitive proof from this, since revolutionary praxis goes beyond its own anticipatory theory. Speculative thought, on the other hand, believes that it is developing philosophy through research. But this research, however, can only confirm speculative thought and did not contradict it.

Bloch seeks a third way: he wants a utopian variation on the preserved speculative tradition. The guarantee of salvation is lost, but the anticipation of salvation sustains certainty: this way, or else nothing will work. All or nothing will be attained; hope finally fulfilled in conformance with the anticipated image of its fulfillment, or else chaos. If utopia carries along the force of its consciousness from that experience in which apparently natural limits have always been historically demonstrated to be surmountable, it should likewise develop a consciousness of its own limits as well. As a dialectical analysis not working with simple approximations to the totality, but as an anticipation of this itself, it cannot be reduced to a differentiated analysis, and likewise the concept of utopia can neither be reduced to the essence of regulatory ideas. It still has to preserve the consciousness of the possibility of such changes that it itself could unpredictably be swallowed up. The disappearance of utopia in its realization could give rise to a situation which is categorically unknown by utopian prediction: new obstacles, new difficulties and new trials could appear. Being *toto coelo* different from all other hitherto known difficulties, they are so faintly related to today's problematic structures that even from the standpoint of utopian consciousness, they were not even problematically predicted.

Realized utopia would be "other." This consciousness of limitation certainly does not suppress consciousness and does not justify the relinquishment of utopia as such to counter-enlightenment. The propaganda against the Jacobin consequences of utopian beginnings, the changed sermon against the terror of morality, only increases the dangers against which it makes one blind.

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Bloch's materialism remains speculative, his dialectic of enlightenment develops beyond the dialectic into a doctrine of potentialities. Stated metaphorically—and in utopia something of the metaphorical always remains—Bloch directs his thoughts toward the development of a generally supposed fecundity of the world rather than to the solution of the contradictions arising from social proscription. The philosophy of nature becomes the nature of his philosophy.

THE OMEN OF OCTOBER

by Oskar Negt

No other philosopher can more rightly claim to be called the philosopher of the revolution than Ernst Bloch. From his youthful work *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918) to that on *Münzer: Theologian of the Revolution*, to *The Heredity of This Epoch*, from the *Principle of Hope* to *Natural Right and Human Dignity* and to *Political Measurements* runs a live-wire marked by two characteristic elements even within the structure of the remote problematics of epistemology, aesthetics and the philosophy of nature: helping to conceive a deeply rooted moral materialism encompassing all of the realm of nature and history and expressing the will, the multiple revolutionary potentialities not free in nature and in society.

It is preliminarily necessary to defend Bloch from abuse, which tends to crop up in regard to the theological mode of his thought. The fact that Bloch is still today received more intensely by the theology of two denominations than by the political left stems more from the theoretical backwardness of Marxists than from the eschatological tracts of his materialism to which, on the arid terrain of the revolutionary categories, the deceptive label "philosophy of hope" could easily be attached.

Bloch is a philosopher of revolution in an historically specific sense. If Marx speaks of Kant's philosophy as the "German theory of the French Revolution," in the term "German" there resounds the critique of the backwardness of the social conditions from whose limiting perspective not even the thought of great idealist philosophy from Kant to Hegel was free.

Thus, if one avoids that pathetic mixture, one can instead say: *Bloch is the German philosopher of the October Revolution*, even where his attention had turned, as in the last few years, to the problems of the revolutionary intelligentsia and to the Third World liberation movements. And this "national" predicate of his philosophy absolutely does not restrict its universal validity. In fact, it contradistinguishes the materialistically concrete content. There is no thinker in the German language who, with similar intensity and perseverence, has provided a reformulation, characterized by a raised theoretical consciousness and historical sensibility, of the experience of German history and in particular of its restorations and counterrevolutions, to be thereby able to determine even more clearly and without illusions the environment for the necessary revolutionary changes.

It belongs to the better kind of materialism to apply the "differentiations in the concept of progress" even to the socialist movement. In the end, according to Bloch, there is a new *Vormärz*, the perspectives of new revolutionary changes tied to the rebellion of the intelligentsia in advanced industrial societies.

What then is the measure of all his political evaluations?

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It is the epochal occurrence of the October Revolution and its moral and emancipatory content, which today is no longer linked to the material foundation of a single social formation as in the Stalinist era, when those Marxists engaged in fighting Fascism could safely assume. This historical determination of the yardstick does not contradict what Bloch discusses in the preface to *Political Measurements*, and better still, in *Natural Law and Human Dignity*: the dialectical interweaving of politics and morality up to the point where morality becomes the guiding norm for politics. Such a claim does not make Bloch a moral philosopher, nor his philosophy a moral vision of the world. He has stretched Marx's and Engels's idea of the socialist inheritance to the utmost, filled it with content and thereby freed it from that fatal phraseology that since Kautsky, and particularly in the orthodoxy of Soviet Marxism, has accompanied it. It is a matter of what is not completely resolved in class ideologies, of what has not yet been completely restored to the idea of liberty, equality, and fraternity, of the immanence that has held sway in all history up until now and of the democracy of primitive communism in morality, in the heretic movements and in the natural law doctrines, which carry along the expectations of emancipation of the proletarian revolution.

The seizure of power by the proletariat is an indispensable condition, but it introduces the end of pre-history only if it realizes what in class society could assume the utopian form of necessity and fantastic dreams. In this sense, one can say, modifying Lenin's dictum concerning revolutionary *Realpolitik*, that this tension of the superfluous does not estrange Bloch from what is separable from the class content of the instinctive fantasies of man, as he likewise does not become estranged from reality through his holding fast to "what remains of the utopian image in its realization." In fact, he draws his revolutionary sense of reality precisely from this apparent idealism. All of this is most clearly shown in the determination of the main battle line, antifascism, which, according to Bloch, could have been held only under two conditions. On the one hand, through the implacable critique of the "socialist undernourishment of concrete fantasy," of the "intellectual contraction of perspectives" concerning which only those who do not know Bloch's thought can claim that it was not directed toward all the formations and organizations of the labor movement. On the other hand, through an analysis of the differential examination of the ambivalence of fascist irrationalism which cannot be taken out of one's midst by an abstract and rationalistic enlightenment, since its material foundation is nothing less than satisfaction turned upside down, partly spilling over into the self-destruction of real wants, of the hopes of exploited and oppressed masses.

IN MEMORY OF BRUNO RIZZI*

by Antonio Carlo and Umberto Melotti

January 13, Bruno Rizzi died in Bussolengo, Italy, at the age of 75. Except for a brief note by Giorgio Galli in *Mondoperaio*, his death has gone unnoticed. Rizzi, as Galli noted, was an author ignored and "cursed." His work on the USSR (*La Bureaucratisation du monde* [Paris, 1939]), was discussed worldwide within the left opposition from the early 1940s on, but direct knowledge of his contribution has

*Originally published in *Terzo Mondo*, 10:34 (December 1976-77), pp. 113-115. Translated by George R. Alkalay.

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remained limited to a restricted circle of scholars and militants.

His debate with Trotsky is almost always mentioned as something that one has heard of. Few know that the Bruno R. to whom the great Russian revolutionary frequently refers in his last lectures (later collected in a volume entitled *In Defense of Marxism*) is in fact Rizzi. Moreover, Rizzi was considered an able interlocutor not only by Brotsky, but by Schactmann, Kendall, Deutscher, and Pierre Naville as well. He was abundantly plagiarized by Burnham in a sociological bestseller of the 1940s (by far inferior to Rizzi's text) and was the only Italian author included in an anthology on Marxism published in Paris in 1970.

Why has there been this silence concerning Rizzi? Traditional, closed Italian academic culture (Rizzi was not a professor, a journalist or a laywer, but earned his living selling shoes) is not unrelated to this, but it is certainly not the main factor. The fact is that, already in the 1930s, Rizzi was questioning the socialist character of the USSR, which in his view represented the first manifestation of a particular type of class society, different from capitalism and, according to him, destined to spread worldwide: bureaucratic collectivism.

That placed him against the whole organized labor movement at the time, whether communist or social-democratic, including the most consistent left opposition—i.e., the Trotskyists, who were still kidding themselves about the socialist character (albeit distorted) of the USSR. Alone against everyone, he corroborated Erasmus's bitter realization, according to which the truth should not be told if it cannot be accepted. The same fate as that thinker, however, could befall Rizzi: to conquer after his death.

Of course, there is no lack of limitations and errors, even serious ones, in Rizzi. In particular, he lacked the ability to move beyond intuitions to the level of coherent and systematic scientific analysis. Thus, he came to defend generic equivalences between Stalinism, Fascism, Nazism, and Roosevelt's New Deal. In the latter part of his life he even got to the point of considering the USSR as a feudal country (although, in an annotated edition of his book, entrusted to us for an eventual second edition, he asked us not to publish those two chapters of the second part in which such a definition appears).

Nevertheless, it was certainly not because of his limitations and errors that a curtain of silence fell over him. Nothing is said about Rizzi precisely because of his merits. Even after Stalin's death (which was not the end of Stalinism), the labor movement is far from openly confronting the problem of the social nature of the USSR.

Above all, in order to be acceptable within the democratic-bourgeois framework, the Italian Communist Party finds itself tactically mediating two contradictory requirements: the recognition of the autonomy of the USSR and the necessity of some alliance or friendship, even if among equals, with that state and its ruling party, so as not to remain isolated in the certainly not improbable case of growing U.S. interference in Italy. This mediation has resulted in a criticism of individual acts of Soviet power, qualified as "errors"—even serious ones (e.g., the invasion of Czechoslovakia)—without reaching the point where the system, considered socialist, is called into question, even when, due to "error," it invades a sister country, puts forth theories of limited sovereignty, represses strikes and dissent, etc.

In this context, there is no room for Rizzi's radical and ruthless analysis, not even as a point of departure for criticism. The conspiracy of silence is better. Furthermore, his position, in underlining the class character of Soviet bureaucracy, could be contagious for the Western proletariat. Even in Western Europe, the communist parties

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(although if in a quite different form than the USSR and the other Eastern European countries, at least to the extent that they do not represent, at least for the time being, the dominant class) are structured as bureaucratized institutions frequently choking off the masses' autonomous initiative. It is no accident that the Italian Communist Party's stance is critical of the Soviet leadership in the Sakharov case (a prominent figure seeking a Western-type "democratization" of the USSR), while it is almost indifferent or openly hostile to the Polish workers who march in the streets against the bureaucracy or to the poet-worker Haratzi, arrested for having put forth a radical criticism of the system. The idea for the Italian Communist Party is a voluntaristic Western type "democratization," possibly gradual and painless, directed from above and managed by the same parties in power in the individual Eastern countries, and not a socialist and workers' revolution overturning the power and privileges of the "new class."

In so far as the New Left is concerned, it can be said that it has confronted the problem with even occasionally noteworthy contributions (e.g., those of Lisa Foa, Edoarda Masi, Enrica Collotti Pischel), but it has tendentially succumbed to the Chinese theoretical positions which, as is well known, speak of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. Even here, the unadmitted necessity of a new point of international reference has resulted in the quite uncritical acceptance of fundamentally erroneous conceptions. Moreover, on the level of the youth movements, the theory of state capitalism comprises an easier position to accept, in so far as it does not presuppose the formulation of a new interpretative theoretical model, especially formulated so as to explain the nature of the new Russian society in its historical specificity. The equation industry plus exploitation equals capitalism lends itself to vulgarization more than the theory of bureaucratic collectivism.

The Socialist Party has instead expressed since 1950 a position of over-all dissent from the USSR, but its inability simultaneously to express a radical critique of class society as such (precisely during the period of the Hungarian drama the Italian Communist Party initiated a rediscovery of the "values of bourgeois democracy"), has precluded a serious analysis of the social nature of the USSR. What has prevailed, especially in the bleak years of the center-left and the social-democratic unification, has been a substantial lack of interest in the problem and its instrumentalization in order to create difficulties for the Italian Communist Party. Also contributing to all this has been the custom of banally pragmatic and short-winded politics, deprived of an effective theoretical orientation, in which the horizon of the central committees frequently remained circumscribed around governmental crises and cabinet reshuffles.

Bad times, then, for poor Rizzi. Nevertheless, it is not clear that this situation will continue. The game of tactical mediation is by now worn out and a phase is looming in which in the East and West the ability for a radical critical analysis of present class society will constitute an indispensable element of a politics directed toward surmounting the two repressive systems, afflicted by profound socio-economic crises. Rizzi could then be rediscovered with both his merits and limitations. This is a wish we make not only for the sake of old Bruno R., but also since such a change of focus would imply a qualitative leap for the whole left.

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EXTERNAL POLEMICS:

ON INFANTILE DISEASES AND SENILE DIAGNOSES: THE CASE OF HORTON AND FILSOUFI*

by Paul Piccone

The success of the Russian Revolution has had, as one of its less glorious consequences, the annihilation of the critical spirit among scores of Western intellectuals. Because of this, relatively insignificant theoreticians such as Lenin have been embalmed with an aura of omniscience and infallibility, while their usually pedestrian texts have been elevated to the status of classics. That Lenin's thought was essentially *bourgeois*, especially in his analysis of imperialism, the state, revolution,

*This short piece was written in a burst of anger after having read the lead article of the Winter 1977 issue of *The Insurgent Sociologist*. It was sent along with the following two letters to the editors of that journal to allow them to correct a monumental mistake in printing the Horton-Filsoufi nonsense. Given their Marxist-Leninist outlook, however, it is not surprising that they found it "unsubstantial." It is published here not only to set the historical record straight, but as an indication of the growing falling rate of intelligence among American "Marxist-Leninists."

Prof. Albert Szymanski
The Insurgent Sociologist
Department of Sociology
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

February 11, 1977

Dear Al:

During the last few years you have managed to publish some pretty rotten stuff, but the lead article in the last issue really takes the cake. As an editor you have a certain responsibility to make sure that what you publish is at least minimally accurate. Horton's and Filsoufi's piece is so far off the wall that it makes one wonder whether it is possible for people working with the *Insurgent Sociologist* to be so ignorant about the history of Marxism. Here it is not a matter of interpretation, but of simple awareness of the existence of documents concerning the left-communists.

Not only were they not "subjectivists" (although some people, myself included, would argue that there is absolutely nothing wrong with that), but they cannot be identified with the works of Lukács and Korsch. Enclosed you will find a hastily written reply that tries to do a little justice to the historical record.

I have not bothered to deal with the more ridiculous aspects of Horton's and Filsoufi's paper (such as the half-assed recycling of structuralist Marxism or the completely idiotic critique of Lukács and Korsch). This may be a matter of interpretation, and Horton and Filsoufi have a right to believe whatever nonsense they choose. What they have no right to do, however, is to write on a topic concerning which they are totally ignorant and to distort the record simply on the basis of very unreliable secondary sources.

Regards,
Paul Piccone

P.S. Rather than simply parroting Northern European structuralist Marxism, maybe it would help to begin a serious debate about its merits and foundations.

Prof. John Horton
Department of Sociology
UCLA
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February 11, 1977

Dear John:

Enclosed you will find a short note that I quickly wrote in reply to your article in the last issue of *The Insurgent Sociologist*. Let me say right off that I have read incompetent articles in my time,

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philosophy and science, has long been established.[1] What has remained uninvestigated is the *specificity* of Lenin's contribution to Marxist politics. A close examination of his works in terms of the socio-political contexts within which they were written readily reveals this specificity as the instrumentalization of theory for political ends which are never made entirely clear in the debates and, consequently, remain beyond the reach of critical scrutiny. Contrary to bourgeois or religious apologetics where theory is engaged to justify pre-given conclusions, Leninist apologetics uses theory as a political weapon to destroy adversaries without bothering to state the real issues at stake.[2] Thus, today it is not surprising to find Kafka and Stalin as the two sides of "communist" political life.

What allowed this *modus operandi* to remain unchallenged was, first, the heated political contexts within which Lenin's writings constituted concrete interventions—thus preventing the calm, deliberate reflection needed to clarify issues—and then the presence of the Stalinist secret police whose impatience with theoretical subtleties is all too well known. This tragedy, however, turns into a farce when Western academics neither engaged in heated political battles nor disposing of significant numbers of KGBs attempt to employ similar tactics. Horton's and Filsoufi's recent attack on what they consider "left-communism"[3] is exemplary in this respect since their muddled recycling of one of the two most bureaucratic and Stalinist texts that Lenin ever wrote[4] is marred by a level of ignorance, oversimplification and general technical incompetence seldom found even among classical East German or Bulgarian party hacks.

The claim that "Marxism has been least developed politically and theoretically in the United States"[5] is as widely accepted as it is wrong. It is well-known that Marx published much of his journalistic work in the *New York Daily Tribune* after 1852, and that he had the International transferred to New York after it seemed to have run aground in Europe. But even more important, the steady influx of German immigrants to the U.S. kept theoretical and political activity at a fairly high level. At the beginning of the century the works of Boudin, Untermann and other socialists writing for the *International Socialist Review* and for the Kerr Publishing Co. in Chicago matched even the best contributions by Marxists associated with the Second

but yours was by far one of the worst that I have ever seen. If you want to parrot Lenin's nonsense, at least you should try to find out what the real issues were and who passed for a left-communist in 1920.

Before making a fool of yourself again, I suggest that you do at least some minimal research before writing anything further along these lines. It is an insult to the intelligence of every American Marxist and or sociologist to publish such utter nonsense.

Regards,

Paul Piccone

1. Cf. Frederic J. Fleron and Lou Jean Fleron, "Administration Theory as Repressive Political Theory," *Telos*, 12 (Summer 1972), pp. 61-92; Francois George, "Forgetting Lenin," *Telos*, 18 (Winter 1973-74), pp. 53-88; Antonio Carlo, "A Redefinition of Imperialism," *Telos*, 20 (Summer 1974), pp. 108-119; Paul Piccone, "Gramsci's Marxism: Beyond Lenin and Togliatti," *Theory and Society*, 3:3 (Winter 1976).

2. This, of course, is precisely what happens in "Left-Wing Communism." For an account of how the same strategy functions in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, see my "Towards an Understanding of Lenin's Philosophy," *Radical America*, 4:6 (September-October, 1970), pp. 3-20.

3. John Horton and Fari Filsoufi, "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder in Theory and Method," *Insurgent Sociologist*, VII:1 (Winter, 1977), pp. 5-17.

4. The other one, of course, is "What Is to Be Done?"

5. Horton and Filsoufi, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

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International in Europe.[6] Furthermore, in a world choked by Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, most of the globe became unsuitable for serious Marxist research. Consequently, with the immigration after the middle 1920s of the council communists first, and of the Frankfurt School later, the U.S. became the center of Marxist theoretical work. Even from the orthodox Marxist prespective emphasizing political economy, all of the main theoretical contributions in the 1930s came from the U.S. in the works of Grossmann, Mattick, Sweezy, Pollock, Rosdolsky and others—although not always in English.[7] Needless to say, after the 1920s there were *no* theoretical developments from the Marxist-Leninists, the best of whom—Bukharin, Rubin, Preobrazhensky and scores of lesser figures—met the ultimate theoretical refutation through Stalin's bullets.

The history of American working class organizations is similarly forgotten by those Marxist-Leninists whose obsession with the party panacea blinds them to genuine class organizations. Thus, the IWW prefigured, even before WW I, the only class organization with real revolutionary potential. Repudiating the craft-unionism of the AFL and the bureaucratization of struggles by a central organ, the IWW sought to vindicate the unity of politics and economics while constantly focusing on the point of production as the main battleground between labor and capital. What led to its defeat was eventually the capitalist reorganization of the production process and the creation of a massive consciousness industry which not only prevented the automatic correlation between social being and social consciousness postulated by traditional Marxism, but also precipitated the integration of the working class and its organization as new internal control mechanisms of monopoly capitalism.[8]

Contrary to what Horton and Filsoufi think, the appeal of what they disparagingly term "idealistic Marxism" cannot be attributed either to the lack of Marxist theoretical and political heritage, or "the lacking of a Marxist-Leninist political and intellectual formation." Marxism-Leninism has absolutely *nothing* to say to contemporary Americans—or anyone, for that matter. It is the ideology of the bureaucracy resulting, in the best of cases, in the cretinization of the masses through the contradictory platitudes of Mao's little red book.[9] The New Left sought to eradicate domination at the level of lived human experience, and it insisted—up to the very end—in not reproducing the structures of domination in the very process of eliminating them. In this respect, it was suspicious of any theoretical elaboration that did not directly relate to the problems. Only through their total ignorance concerning left-communism can Horton and Filsoufi associate it with Lukács and Korsch and see it as having any influence on the American left today. Further, the claim that

6. Cf. Cristiano Camporesi, *Il Marxismo Teorico negli USA, 1900-1945* (Milan, 1973).

7. Yet, even of the debates which were carried out in German, enough is in English to provide a clear picture of what was at stake. Thus, while the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* did not become *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* until 1939, *Rätekorrespondenz* became *Council Correspondence* as early as 1934 (eventually to become *Living Marxism*, and then *New Essays*, until 1943, when it ceased publication).

8. For more extensive discussion, see Mario Tronti, "Workers and Capital," *Telos*, 14 (Winter 1972), pp. 25-62; and Gabriella M. Bonacchi, "The Council Communists between the New Deal and Fascism," *Telos*, 30 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 43-72. For the best analysis of the Taylorization of production, see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974); and, for an analysis of the advertisement and culture industries, see Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (new York, 1976).

9. When all the dust finally settled, the Cultural Revolution has turned out to be a struggle between two *different* sectors of the bureaucracy carried out with anti-bureaucratic slogans.

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"subjectivism" is what charaterizes the left-wing problematic is particularly ridiculous, since the main branches of this political tendency have historically been attacked precisely for their objectivism!

Who were the left-communists? Although the literature in English on this subject is not overwhelming, to choose Lukács and Korsch as its representatives—particularly their more philosophical works—is absurd.[10] First of all, between April 1920—the date of the formation of the *Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands* (KAPD), the official left-communist party—and the publication of *History and Class Consciousness* in 1923, Lukács was rapidly moving toward Leninism from a Luxemburgist position by attempting to reconcile the two.[11] Secondly, Korsch was a thoroughgoing Leninist (in terms of what he thought Leninism to be) from 1919 to 1925,[12] and had nothing to do with the left-communists until 1927, when his group, *Entschiedene Linke*, joined the KAPD. Thirdly, Korsch and Lukács held qualitatively different theoretical positions which resulted in different political choices—and neither of which can be reduced to "subjectivism."[13] Fourthly, the real issue between Lenin and the left-communists was not subjectivism—if anything, Lenin's own voluntarism could be charged with subjectivism, while the left-communists were "objectivists"—but, as Rusconi has put it, "the problem of genuine socialist democracy."[14] Fifthly, Lenin's dogmatic and authoritarian bombast in *Left-Wing Communism*[15] was totally untenable in 1920 and impossible to defend after more than half a century of history has completely vindicated the left-communists' worst premonitions.[16]

10. There is enough material in English, however, to prevent such erroneous claims. Cf. Paul Mattick, "Anti-Bolshevist Communism in Germany" *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 57-69; many of the relevant documents can be found in Helmut Gruber, *International Communism in the Era of Lenin: A Documentary History* (Ithaca, 1967). The best sources, however, are Hans M. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969) and Kool, *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft* (Olten and Freiburg, 1970). Cf. also Enzo Rutigliano, *Linkskommunismus e Rivoluzione in Occidente: Per una Storia della KAPD* (Bari, 1974). Horton and Filsoufi seem to rely entirely on Aronowitz's inaccurate and misleading "Left-Wing Communism: The Reply to Lenin," in Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare, eds., *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism since Lenin* (New York, 1972), pp. 169-194.

11. As Cacciari put it, during this period Lukács' task was "to marry Luxemburg the theoretician with Lenin the politician." Cf. Massimo Cacciari, "Sul Problema dell'Organizzazione: Germania 1917-1921," in György Lukács, *Kommunismus 1920-1921* (Padova, 1972), p. 63.

12. Cf. Michael Buckmiller, "Marxismus als Realität: Zur Rekonstruktion der theoretischen und politischen Entwicklung Karl Korschs," *Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), pp. 15-85. Cf. also Douglas Kellner, "Korsch's Revolutionary Historicism," *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 70-93; Guido De Masi and Giacomo Marramao, "Councils and State in Weimar Germany," *Telos*, 28 (Summer 1976), pp. 3-35; and Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Introduction to Korsch's 'What Is Socialization?'," *New German Critique*, 6 (Fall 1975), pp. 48-59. Most of Korsch's political writings are now collected in Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte*, edited by Erich Gerlach and Jürgen Seifert (Frankfurt am Main, 1974).

13. The only study to date attempting to clearly distinguish between Lukacs and Korsch is Giuseppe Vacca, *Lukacs o Korsch?* (Bari, 1969). For systematic critiques of Vacca, see Paul Breines' review of the book in *Telos*, 5 (Spring 1970), pp. 215-220; and Giacomo Marramao, "Korsch in Italy," *Telos* 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 174-184.

14. Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Prefazione" to Rutigliano, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

15. It is indicative that when Radek tried to have Alexander Berkman (one of the Russian-American anarchists deported back to Russia with Emma Goldman in 1919) translate Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" into English, the latter agreed only on the condition that he be allowed to write a preface to it challenging its content. Of course, Radek looked for another translator. Cf. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York, 1970), vol. II, p. 796.

16. Especially after Lenin's attacks, the analyses of the left-communists appear today almost

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This does not mean that the left-communists did not hold very problematic positions, but only that they were correct in evaluating the nature of the Third International and what were the beginnings of Stalinism. In fact, after they were expelled from the KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschland*) and they formed the KAPD,[17] the left-communists uncritically held on to a "theory of the crash" whereby capitalism was unavoidably doomed to extinction through the unfolding of its internal contradiction. This Luxemburgian heritage placed them squarely on a collision course with Lenin who followed Hilferding[18] in seeing capitalism collapsing only under the revolutionary challenge of a vanguard party that would organize the otherwise reformist masses. The resulting conflicting notions of the party—one as an elite of professional revolutionaries, and the other as an exemplary group[19]—and political strategy are ultimately rooted in this fundamental theoretical difference. Yet, this is inadequate to explain the violence of Lenin's attack and even the expulsion of the dissenters—especially in view of the longstanding mutual admiration and collaboration.[20]

As Rutigliano put it, however, what is decisive is that by 1920 "Lenin had given up the idea that the revolutionary regime required the extension of the revolution into the West. Therefore, the International, which had been created for this purpose, had to become the tool of the new Russian foreign policy, i.e., it had to put pressure on Western governments within the framework of a traditional policy which the Russian state would have adopted in order to guarantee its own survival with respect to capitalist states. Thus, the International was to immediately regroup the large center parties which operated within bourgeois parliaments since it was within these parliaments that it was possible to put pressure on Western bourgeois governments."[21] Given this state of affairs, it is understandable why *discipline* was all important and why the KAPD's abstentionist tactics had to be rebuked even with Lenin's very unconvincing arguments—as Gorter showed in a surprisingly mild reply.[22] To work

as prophecies. In their documents they clearly foresaw the Stalinist degeneration of Russia and most of the barbarities generated in the name of socialism during the last sixty years. Cf. Rutigliano, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-264.

17. Contrary to what the New Left Book editor claims in Georg Lukács, *Political Writings 1919-1929* (London, 1972), p. 52n, those "hostile to Levi" did *not* break away, but were bureaucratically purged by the minority faction on orders from Moscow. Cf. Amadeo Bordiga, "La Situazione in Germania e il Movimento Comunista," in *Il Soviet*, July 11, 1920.

18. In their doctrinaire condemnation of the Second International, Horton and Filsoufi ignore the fact that Lenin himself was a Kautskyian up to 1914 and that Lenin's patchwork economics are heavily indebted to Hilferding's immensely influential *Finanzkapital*.

19. While most left-communists such as Gorter and Pannekoek argued for the party providing only prefigurative and exemplary actions for the proletariat—very reminiscent of the anarchists—the most extreme among them went so far as to reject the need of parties altogether. See Otto Rühle, "Die Revolution ist keine Parteisache!' in Kool, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-337. For an interesting discussion of the anarchist notion of exemplary and prefigurative action, see Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 105ff, 323-324.

20. In fact, even as late as 1920, Anton Pannekoek kept justifying and explaining bolshevik power. See his "Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik," in Kool, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-416. In fact, the very program fo the KAPD pledged solidarity with Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik party. Cf. "Program der Kommunistischen Arbeiter Partei Duetschlands (1920)," in Kool, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-217. Only after the Bolsheviks' and the Third International's position became clearer did the full polarization take place.

21. Rutigliano, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44.

22. Part of Gorter's reply can be found in Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-240. The full reply is in Herman Gorter, "Offener Brief an den Genossen Lenin," in Kool, *op. cit.*, pp. 416-496. The reason why Gorger was so conciliatory has to do with the KAPD's decision to remain within the

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with the conservative labor unions along with the KPD and the social-democrats amounted to helping to protect precisely that privileged labor aristocracy whose reactionary political role had been obvious for at least two decades,[23] while participation in parliaments for Lukács made sense only as a *defensive* strategy.[24] What was crucial, however, was that, unbeknownst to Lukács and the rest of the left-communists, the decision had already been made to turn communist parties everywhere into defense organizations at the service of the Russian state.[25]

By 1922 it had become all too clear that there was no *socialist* content left in the new Bolshevik state and, with the smashing of the Workers' Opposition, Kronstadt and the phasing out of the Soviets, the USSR represented nothing but another form of bourgeois domination. Thus, the left-communists called for the formation of the Fourth International (the *Kommunistische Arbeiter Internationale*). Unlike the more recent Trotskyist Fourth International organized by what Castoriadis has characterized as "a faction of the Stalinist bureaucracy in exile,"[26] the left-communists did not simply explain the Russian degeneration merely in terms of poor leadership. Eventually, they came to see it as merely another form of fascism doomed to collapse under the blows of a world revolution, which, unfortunately, never came.

Contrary to what Horton and Filsoufi think, the problem with left-communism was not idealism and subjectivism, but their stubborn objectivistic insistence on the theory of the inevitable capitalist collapse. This led them to theorize the proletarian revolution in terms of the automatic maturation of objective conditions triggering the required political consciousness in the proletariat. What did them in was not Lenin's vacuous arguments, but the shift of the last vestiges of market capitalism into full monopoly capitalism. Although some of their theories still enjoy a certain popularity in Germany,[27] unlike what Aronowitz hints at[28] and what Horton and Filsoufi

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International as a left-opposition. It is ironic that Horton and Filsoufi repeat Lenin's charge that the left-communists were doctrinaire, i.e., that they derived "the form and content of praxis from some rigid, unilinear principle" (p. 11); whereas, as Gorter's reply clearly shows, it is Lenin who is doctrinaire in this sense when he wants to transpose the Russian experience onto Western Europe.

23. The KAPD supported the AAU (General Workers Union) which, instead of organizing workers along elitist craft-unionist lines, sought to abolish *all* internal distinctions and organize workers as workers. As Bologna shows, this was the only possible progressive position. Cf. Sergio Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origin of the Workers' Council Movement," *Telos*, 13 (Fall 1972), pp. 3-27. Liebman, probably the most sophisticated defender of Lenin, seeks to explain this in terms of the weak Soviet state. Notwithstanding his emphasis *ad nauseam* of Lenin's respect for democracy and comradeship, however, Liebman's own argument to explain the reasons for the "defensive" Soviet measures ultimately supports precisely the continuity between Leninist and Stalinist policies that he seeks to refute. Cf. his *Le Leninisme sous Lénine*, vol. II, "L'Epreuve du Pouvoir" (Paris, 1973), pp. 273-292.

24. Georg Lukács, "The Question of Parliamentarism," *Political Writings 1919-1929, op.cit.*, pp. 53-63.

25. Thus, as is pointed out in an unsigned article (probably by Paul Mattick) in *International Council Correspondence*, II:3-4 (March, 1936), p. 6: "In a proclamation to the 'toilers' of the allied countries of January 28, 1920, Tchicherin declared that Russia had no intention of expanding her power to any other foreign country or to force the Soviet system upon any people against their will. The appeal for the proletarian revolution assumed a meek and platonic character. Not the world revolution but the necessity to establish her place among the nations of the world, determined Russia's foreign policy."

26. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Hungarian Source," *Telos*, 29 (Fall 1976), p. 6n.

27. For a full reconstruction of the left-communists' political economy, see Russell Jacoby, "The Politics of the Crisis Theory: Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism II," *Telos*, 23

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uncritically parrot, the last survivor of the council communists, Paul Mattick, has had no influence whatsoever on the New Left.[29]

It is no use at this point to challenge all of the nonsense that Horton and Filsoufi confuse with Marxism. They still think that the Bolshevik Revolution was a "victory of the Soviets," while even in 1920 the only "soviet" left in Russia was that in its name. They still believe that the Russian aberration constitutes "the first stage of international revolution!" Symptomatically enough, there is not one word in the whole essay about Stalinism. They can still see "the science of historical materialism as one of the positive results of *working class intellectual production*" whereas in truth, all Marxist-Leninist theoreticians have always tended to be petty-bourgeois intellectuals. (In "What Is to Be Done?" Lenin was more honest than Horton and Filsoufi: if some workers should ever show signs of understanding what the story is—not to mention "science"—they should be made into petty-bourgeois intellectuals and then allowed to become professional revolutionaries.) They reproach Korsch for "significantly" not granting Lenin any philosophical status in 1923, whereas it was only in 1927 that *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* was translated into German so that Korsch could read it (and when he did, of course, he hit the roof at such vulgar materialistic nonsense).[30]

It is tempting to polemicize against Horton's and Filsoufi's half-baked adaptations of French structuralist Marxist scientism, but the shoddy character of the whole undertaking should be quite clear by now. As for their fetishization of Marxism as a "science," it need only be pointed out that it ultimately boils down to the search for metaphysical guarantees which, whether in theology, metaphysics or science, remain expressions of intellectual and political immaturity.

(Spring 1975), pp. 3-52; and Giacomo Marramao, "Political Economy and Critical Theory," *Telos*, 24 (Summer 1975), pp. 56-80.

28. Thus, where Aronowitz writes that "Pannekoek, the Dutch poet Hermann Gorter and the German theorists Karl Korsch represented the most comprehensive ideological challenge to the hegemony of Lenin...in the period between the two world wars" (*op. cit.*, p. 169), Horton and Filsoufi misinterpret it to mean that "Lenin's pamphlet 'Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder' was directed against 'Council Communists' in the European parties (for example, the Dutch communists Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter, and Karl Korsch)," in *op. cit.*, p. 11. But Lenin's pamphlet had *absolutely nothing* to say about Korsch. Similarly misleading claims in Aronowitz are that "the Council Communists [were] a clear alternative to Leninism." This certainly was not so clear in 1920 when Pannekoek and Gorter sought to remain "Leninists" even after Lenin's attack while that other unmentioned major council communists, Antonio Gramsci, remained faithful to what he considered Leninism up to his death in 1936. Aronowitz further distorts the situation (by uncritically following Lenin) when he writes that "the Council Communists were unwilling to adjust to the new situation." It was Lenin, rather, who was stubbornly trying to transpose Russian conditions onto the quite different European context. One could go on: the lesson, however, is clear: Horton and Filsoufi should not have relied on only *one* secondary source which, in this case, turns out to be weak.

29. For a comparison of Korsch and Mattick that is very favorable to Korsch, see my "Korsch in Spain," *New German Critique*, 6 (Fall 1975), pp. 148-163. For a pro-Mattick, anti-Korsch account, see Bonacchi, "The Council Communists," *op. cit.*, pp. 69-72.

30. Since this was written, I have been informed by Mrs. Hedda Korsch that before the publication of *Marxism and Philosophy* she herself translated Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* for Korsch so that he could deal with it in his book. Given the nature of Lenin's philosophy, and Korsch's decision to remain in the party, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* was not mentioned in *Marxism and Philosophy*. The nature of Korsch's "Leninism" in the early 1920s, however, remains to be clearly studied.

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COMMUNICATIONS:

THE IDEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A CRITIQUE OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL IN BRITAIN

by Phil Slater

The Spring 1977 issue of *Telos* featured a lengthy review of *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective*. Within the context of a left-wing journal, the review is unsatisfactory, not so much because of its inappropriate personal polemics, but because of its failure to inquire after the book's *political* motivation. The author is dismissed as having illuminated only his own "insular intellectual world" (199), a charge intended in an individual-psychological sense neglecting the problem of the "insular intellectual world" of the country in which the book was written and published: Britain. As a result of this idealist reading, the reviewer is oblivious to the crucial question of the ideological strategy that determined both the content and the form of the book. It is in the hope of precluding further idealist readings that the author here offers a brief reply, which, setting aside all personal issues as well as most of the detailed substantive points raised in the review, attempts to clarify the intended significance of the book within the context of the intellectual climate in which it was written.

It was only in the latter half of the 1960s, with the emergence of the New Left, accompanied by some radical murmurings from the student movement, that there was any prospect of a serious challenge in Britain to the intellectual hegemony of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Bentham, J.S. Mill, etc. Bourgeois ideology ceased to be an unconscious way of intellectual life and became instead an object of critical debate. For the most part, this break was not achieved directly via the Marxian critique of political economy, but indirectly by recourse to such theoreticians as Lukács, Sartre, and (thanks in large measure to the fact that Marcuse was then writing in English) the Frankfurt School. In the case of the latter, the reception suffered from two major defects: first, the lack of any tradition of dialectical theory in Britain, the second, the overemphasis on the later works, particularly Habermas. Thus, even the most enthusiastic reception tended to miss the radical political intentions, let alone ultimate limitations, that characterize Frankfurt School theory in its "classic" form.

This meant that the reception either, at worst, remained *behind* the achievements of the Frankfurt School, or, at best, proved incapable of passing *beyond* it in any constructive sense. This was of significance for the New Left in the 1970s: faced with the growing militancy of the working-class under the Heath Government (dramatically illustrated by the 1972 miners' strike), the need was felt of passing beyond general methodological discussions on the category *praxis* towards a theoretical framework adequate to the political realities of the confrontation of wage-labor and capital. It was precisely here that the limits of Frankfurt School theory and its British reception became increasingly apparent: while "critical theory of society" in its "classic" form featured most of the relevant categories (class, capital, relations of production, revolution, etc.) within a formidable methodological debate, programmatically demanding the operation of these categories within a concrete class analysis, no such analysis of Germany, America, or anywhere else ever materialized (and that includes Pollock's and Neumann's offerings). Indeed, the tendential transformation of "critical theory of society" into a theory of manipulation actually implied that the latter could be founded in the absence of an economic analysis. This weakness proved increasingly serious as time went on: by the 1970s, many British intellectuals were still being

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dazzled by Adorno's (admittedly brilliant) later writings, where the critique of political economy is reduced to little more than an indictment of the commodity-structure, and by Habermas, who was actually arguing that the Marxian critique was "positivistic" and, in any case, "inapplicable" to modern Western society. Marcuse's works of this period were received in much the same spirit. (This rests, in my opinion, on a faulty reading, but that is another matter. As for Horkheimer, we are surely all agreed that it was fortunate that his latter-day "writings" were never made widely available to an English-speaking public.)

In this political and intellectual climate, it was all too easy for the New Left in Britain to dismiss Frankfurt School theory without further ado as the preserve of "petit-bourgeois intellectuals" and turn elsewhere. Inasfar as the turn was to Marx, in particular to the recently translated *Grundrisse*, this was almost entirely salutary. But again, a "mediation" was often necessary, and this was found to a great extent in Althusser, who rapidly threatened to eclipse the Frankfurt School. This influence too was a healthy one, particularly as regards the propaganda for the Marxian concepts of relations of production and class struggle. But many people felt, and still feel, that while Althusser's attacks on "humanist" and "Hegelian" Marxism are substantial, they do not constitute an articulate, let alone devastating, critique of Frankfurt School theory, which far from being *aufgehoben*, was simply repudiated, or even denounced: it was ironical, to say the least, that left-wing intellectuals who were attempting, in the spirit of the Frankfurt School, a critique of the bourgeois notion of "science" should find themselves being assailed not only by bourgeois ideologists, but by Althusserians (at least prior to the French philosopher's "Self-Criticism") precisely *in the name* of "science."

It is not possible to go into this in any greater detail here. Suffice it to say that many intellectuals felt that the growing move towards the Marxian critique of political economy was marred by a tendential "positivism" (related, but not identical to what Althusser himself later castigated as "theoreticism") that was attributable in no small measure to the shallow, abstract "reckoning" with the Frankfurt School. It was in this peculiar conjuncture that *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School* was written, in the hope of making a modest, comradely intervention. And it was this particular ideological motivation that determined both the content and the form of the book.

The *Telos* review opens by "summing up" the book's basic theme thus: "the Frankfurt School was short on practice" (198). Not only is this a caricature of the real criticism levelled against the Frankfurt School: it also suppresses the *differentiated* nature of that critique. As a matter of fact, the entire second chapter of the book is concerned to underline the invaluable contribution made precisely by the Frankfurt School to the historical materialist critique of liberalism, idealism, neo-metaphysics and positivism. And it goes as far as to argue that the Archimedean point on which this entire enterprise turns is precisely the category *praxis*.

However, since the reviewer chooses to ignore the substance of this chapter, he at least refrains from distorting it. But this is not so with the following chapter, which is caricatured as attacking the Frankfurt School for failing to "enlist in the practical and proletarian struggle" (198), and as attacking the Director of the Institute in particular for failing to "articulate a practical politics" (200). In reality, the book makes no such indictments, for the simple reason that it is concerned not with individuals but theoretical apparati and their operation. What is more, any criticisms that are brought to bear are not introduced arbitrarily, but are thematized on the basis of a

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serious discussion of "critical theory of society" itself. Thus, there is a lengthy quotation (57) from Horkheimer's 1937 article "Traditional and Critical Theory" to the effect that the "critical theoretician" has a "specific activity in conjunction with the oppressed class;" this activity resides, according to Horkheimer, in the fact that the critical theoretician's "presentation of the social contradictions appears not merely as an expression of the concrete historical situation, but equally as a stimulating, active factor within that situation;" and the medium of this intervention is supposed, according to Horkheimer, to be a "debate" (*Auseinandersetzung*) between "critical theoretician," "oppressed class," and the latter's "advanced elements." Here we are, according to the very historical class analysis. Yet, and this *does* constitute a criticism, the threshold was not crossed by the Frankfurt School at this, or any other time (with the notable, but complex exception of the later Marcuse).

The book did not, as the reviewer ironically implies, expect anybody to be "stunned by the news" (198). As the Introduction stresses, this failure of the Frankfurt School was the focal point in the critique undertaken by the German student anti-authoritarian movement as early as the 1960s. What *is* novel in *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School* is the sustained attempt to thematize as concretely as possible what lies *beyond* the ultimate limits of the Frankfurt School's philosophy of praxis. To this end, the book holds up the theoretical production of the Frankfurt School's "classic" period against the historical backcloth of the struggle against fascism in Germany. This is *not*, as the reviewer claims, to argue that there existed a set of "attractive and practical options" which the Frankfurt School "chose to avoid" (198). Inasmuch as the book is not concerned with individuals, it could scarcely deal in "options," whether attractive or otherwise. Rather, it pursues a three-fold aim; first, to show how the concepts of capital, class, revolution, advanced elements, etc. (all of which figured in a philosophical context in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*) also figured in a directly political debate at this time over a vast ideological spectrum stretching from Social Democracy to the remnants of Council Communism; second, to stress the sorry (even according to the Frankfurt School's *own* principles) fact that the *Zeitschrift* never conducted its promised "debate" with these, or any other political groupings; and third, that in the absence of any such concrete political dimension, the concept of praxis threatens (as proved by Horkheimer's and Adorno's subsequent work) to degenerate into a self-perpetuating hypostatization.

Instead of summarizing *this* critique, the reviewer, still concerned with individuals, argues that the political groupings discussed in the book "as viable options either predate the Frankfurt School or suffer from their own flaws" (200). But the purpose of this discussion is not to present "options" (let alone "flawless" ones), but to introduce into the theoretical constellation of "critical theory of society" a debate that was going on in the workers' movement. On the subject of historical dates, it must be emphasized that in the German-speaking world (but not only there), the debate was a crucial element in political life at least into 1935, thus spanning half the life of the *Zeitschrift*, which, however, never once joined in the debate. Still on the subject of dates, it must not be forgotten that after 1935, the German experience continued to play a crucial role in the political strategy of the Spanish Civil War. The latter could well have served as the book's historical backcloth, particularly after citing Horkheimer's cryptic reference of 1937 to "the European forces of freedom" being "disoriented and attempting to regroup," where Horkheimer himself argues that in such a conjuncture "the suprapartisan and thus abstract conception of the role of the intelligentsia serves only to cloud the real issues" (55). But pedagogic considerations suggest that such a

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thematization would have made the book appear far more abstract than is the case with the excursus on Germany. More promising, perhaps, would have been to place the Frankfurt School's analysis of manipulation in the *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* against the background of class recomposition in American industry, but that tactic was ruled out by personal factors that are not relevant here. Thus, for better or worse, the struggle in Germany, the Frankfurt School's country of personal and intellectual origin, was used *not* to show "options" that the individual members "avoided," but to introduce a dimension that "criticcal theory of society" never incorporated into its analyses in a manner even approaching its own stringent methodological demands.

To conclude: *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School* aims, in a specific ideological constellation, to underline the Frankfurt School's contribution to a critique of bourgeois ideology, while simultaneously trying to introduce, as concretely and as "mediately" as possible, some preliminary considerations on the nature of a theory adequate to the class struggle. The book may be clumsy, and it is certainly not without omissions (although the reviewer's list is not too convincing), but the fundamental point is that both the content and the form of the book are determined in the last instance by *political* intentions. Any reading which is oblivious to this dimension belongs to the very tradition against which the book is directed.

ON SLATING SLATER

by Timothy C.L. Plaut

In spite of Paul Piccone's dire warnings as to the fate befalling unsolicited material for *Telos*, the briefest of notes might provide less, rather than more of a laugh.[1] My concern is with Russell Jacoby's demolition of the latest attempt to authenticate critical theory—and not only Critical Theory—for the British scene, an enterprise that employs suet-pudding mediations that fall absurdly short of the demands of the material.

Jacoby and Piccone seem to be taking it in turns to run amok through the foibles of English Marxism,[2] a feat that they perform with consummate ease and excellence. In terms of the respective writers reviewed, the editor of *New Left Review* can at least be regarded as seriously interested in tracing a plurality of trajectories through a variety of thinkers, while Phil Slater[3] appears to be an obsessive-compulsive—his neurosis being tied up with a narrowly defined instrumentalist politics—who could have stumbled just as easily upon a Rotarian think-tank as upon the luckless Frankfurt School. More seriously, however, Jacoby's offering, in consciously maintaining a jazzy tone, skips over the singularly most important error of Slater's book, an error that will ensure that a bad book might surreptitiously leave readers with a misconception, the

1. Paul Piccone, "Internal Polemics," *Telos* 31 (Spring 1977), pp. 179-180.
2. See Piccone's review of publications by New Left Books of the works by Anderson and Timpanaro, *Telos* 30 (Winter 1976-77), and Jacoby on Phil Slater in *Telos* 31 (Spring 1977).
3. Phil Slater, *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective* (London, 1977).

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retention of which should further impede any attempt to extricate the emancipatory from the positivist in our reading of Marx.

Slater has written this book from an "instant Marxist perspective,"[4] on the assumption that the Frankfurt School could legitimately be understood from the "yea-boo" polarities that this perspective imputes. Consequently, Horkheimer is a good boy when he implicitly accepts Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy,[5] but he is scolded when he fails to work hard enough at his economics homework.[6] Adorno is okay as long as he links mass culture to monopoly capital;[7] he becomes quite unacceptable when he does not concoct an aesthetic directed at "concrete agitational struggle for mass class consciousness."[8] Marcuse produces fine dialectical analyses of ideology and manipulation,[9] yet as a result of containing his analysis in this area, he condemns himself to being "little better than the Social Democrats."[10] Other thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School are subjected to this meat auction, with the utilizable flesh being cut off from the irritatingly undigestible skeleton.

Russell Jacoby alludes to this observation when he writes: "The 'thesis,' stripped of its stupidities, suffers from the flaw that few, including the Frankfurt School, would controvert it."[11] Yet he leaves it at that, not documenting the significance of this flaw and rather taking up Adorno's point that the interventionist theory in an increasingly barbaric society cannot but lose sight of the dialectical method's concern with understanding social reality. The point must be made, in the face of Slater's attempt to market the acceptable face of Critical Theory, that the development of thinking by members of the School consisted in the main of the highly ambiguous and often incoherent movement away from a critique founded on an ontology of labor to the far more radical study of instrumental reason tout court. In a transition spanning almost half a century, Frankfurt, not unlike "Italian phenomenological Marxists, . . . Freudo-Marxists, . . . French existential Marxists,"[12] became increasingly aware of the limitations of the categories in which Marx undertook the critique of political economy and, in a consciously unsystematic manner, began to test the limits of apparently total reification through an examination of areas as disparate as aural regression and the validity of contemporary philosophical schools.

Slater's concern with the Frankfurt School exclusively during the 1930s and 1940s, and his orthodox Marxist perspective, ensure that he misunderstands their implicit concerns. While Jacoby shows the absurdity of Slater's politics in search of the political, he does not demonstrate the far more serious misconception—namely, the uncoupling from Marx that really constituted the critical and progressive tension within Critical Theory. Jacoby's earlier exchange with Martin Jay on this question[13] does not sufficiently break with historical materialism's unease with unease, its incapacity to accept the need to meet a totality of absorption and manipulation obliquely.

4. Jacoby, *op.cit.*, p. 202.
5. Slater, *op.cit.*, p. 45.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
11. Jacoby, *op.cit.*, p. 200.
12. Mark Poster, "Introduction" to Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis, 1975), p. 1.
13. Jacoby, "Marxism and the Critical School," *Theory and Society* 1 (1974); Jay, "Russell Jacoby's 'Marxism and Critical Theory'," *Theory and Society*, 2 (1975).

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In their movement away from systematization and the prevailing modes of discourse, and not simply in their distancing of themselves from Marx, lay the truly revolutionary nature of their work. In not coming to terms fully with this unspoken problematic of Critical Theory, Jacoby's advance upon Slater is a limited one.

REPLY TO SLATER AND PLAUT

by Russell Jacoby

Phil Slater is to be congratulated for his temperate response to an intemperate review; or rather: he should be congratulated except that his very restraint is more ruthless than any anger. For little bothers Slater more than the implication that he is poking around with individuals. His book is "concerned not with individuals but theoretical apparati and their operation," apparently located in some transhuman universe. Neither the situation of his book nor the options that the Frankfurt School faced can be understood in individual terms; nor in fact are any of the criticisms that he advances "introduced arbitrarily." Everything is mainlined into the course of history. Consistent with this, I am not named once but am known exclusively as the reviewer. It is only surprising that Slater does not sign himself the angel of history. Pace Slater, he will be known as the author.

Here as elsewhere there is too much evidence of the muck of the Althusserians. Against an idealist reading, to which the reviewer succumbed, the author suggests a materialist reading, which of course is *political*. "Political" serves as the official stamp of left-wing legitimacy. Italicized and underlined it does wonders for tired Marxist clap-trap. That the book is political can hardly be questioned; after all, it is subtitled "A Marxist Perspective." Yet I fail to see why the "*political* motivation" or the "*political* intentions" redeem a book that is substandard.

The author also borrows a favorite ploy from the Althusserian closet: past tripe is explained away by the fact that it was written at a particular time and place, as if there could be some doubt about this. That something is written at a particular "conjuncture" becomes the universal excuse. Althusser regularly does this, at the same time as lambasting "historicism." Apparently no one has seen fit to mention the inconsistency. No matter.

The author has adopted this approach. We are reminded that the book was published in England in 1977; no evidence is offered to prove this, but it will not be contested here. This fact is supposed to go far in explaining the book. We are presented with a short course on the impoverished history of British Marxism. The reviewer's charge that the book only illuminates the author's insular intellectual world is answered by the insular intellectual world of British Marxism. The author turns out to be a guiltless agent of British intellectual stagnation. It is difficult to know what to make of this: is this a confession? or a boast?

To be sure, and to be fair, the book intends not simply to be a witless reflection of a witless situation, but an "intervention." Like "political," this turns pedestrian Marxism into high science. As to the quality of the intervention, the author and reviewer are totally at odds. Nothing the author states here about his "three-fold aim" or his "differentiated" critique improves matters. Despite its political motivation and the specific ideological situation of Britain in the 1970s, I think the book is shoddy in conception and execution; and for some reason—perhaps only nostalgia—I imagine

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that the author is partly responsible.

One comment about Timothy C.L. Plaut's friendly communication: there is a difference between us. I confess to my "unease with unease" and am hardly ready to consign Marxist political economy to the museum; nor do I think that "uncoupling from Marx" constitutes an adequate perspective for interpreting critical Theory. Consider three kindred and almost simultaneous essays: Adorno's "Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?" (1968), Marcuse's "Obsolescence of Marxism?" (1967), and Horkheimer's "Marx heute" (1968). Nor do I think that is an either-or choice, either a critique of instrumental reason or political economy. I as well as others have tried to argue (see my "The Politics of the Crisis Theory," *Telos* 23, Marramao's "Political Economy and Critical Theory," *Telos* 24), that critical theory remains fundamentally committed to political economy, though this relation cannot be reduced to a formula.

NOTES ON JEWISH CRISES

by Mitchell Cohen

Harvey Blume's review of Gershom Scholem's *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (*Telos* 31) misrepresents Zionism and Scholem's attitude toward the Palestinians, and contains serious historical inaccuracies regarding Scholem's record in the Israel-Arab conflict.

Blume claims that the absence of any discussion of the Arab-Jewish problem in this particular volume demonstrates that "Scholem completely shares the failure of Zionism" to consider the Arabs. In the first place, to argue that Zionism as a whole is monolithic or to argue that the Zionist movement was monolithic concerning the Palestinians is a serious factual distortion. There are and always have been serious differences within Zionism on just about every issue, including that of the Palestinians. Socialist-Zionists, religious Zionists and right-wing revisionist Zionists have agreed on few issues outside of the need for a national solution to the Jewish problem. Aharon Cohen's mammoth *Israel and the Arab World* (1970) superbly documents this fact. If one argues that all of Zionism can be reduced to the thought or policies of a Ben Gurion or a Begin (neither of whom agreed with each other on almost anything), then one can argue just as well (and wrongly) that socialism may be reduced to Stalinism.

Secondly, had Blume researched Scholem's record instead of presenting his own biases, he would have discovered that Gershom Scholem has long been a Zionist profoundly concerned with the Palestinian question. That he did not include any articles dealing with the issue in the particular volume under question was, of course, his prerogative. But that does not justify erroneous conclusions. Scholem was, during the years of the British Mandate, a member of *Brit Shalom* (Peace Alliance), an organization espousing equal rights for Arabs and Jews and the less than popular idea of a bi-national state in Palestine. Along with other prominent figures, such as Martin Buber, Scholem was active in the work of the League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement. During this, his most active political period, Scholem was denouncing just what Blume accuses him of—ignorance of the Arabs. While Scholem's chief concern in more recent years has been the internal dynamics of Jewish history and Jewish mysticism, one will nonetheless find his name on the list of sponsors of a major symposium scheduled for Tel Aviv this fall entitled "When the Guns Fall

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Silent." The symposium is sponsored by *New Outlook*, the leading English-language publication of Israeli doves.

Thus, to argue, as Blume does, that Scholem's attitude can be characterized as "Better for the Arabs not to exist; if they continue to do so ignore them," is false. Indeed, Scholem has always looked for the "new relationship to the Palestinians" that Blume claims Scholem avoids.

Blume's review, furthermore, accuses Scholem and Israelis in general of parochialism—"insularity." He writes that "it is difficult to think of Israeli thinkers or artists who have made contact with that non-Jewish world in the midst of which they live." If this was the case, one might argue that given Israel's relatively small population and thirty years of war, such an occurrence is not surprising. But again, it is simply not the case and one can respond with a simple list of names off the top of one's head: Shlomo Avineri (author of *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* and *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*), Nobel laureat for literature S.Y. Agnon, Martin Buber, the artist Agam, historian Jacob Talmon and musicians Yitchak Pearlman and Daniel Barenboim. One should also note that an important motif of Scholem's historiography has been the interrelation of Jewish and world history. Blume's criticism of Scholem's choice of essays shows less Scholem's "failure" to deal with the Arabs than the reviewer's failure to deal with Scholem in a fair light.

Finally, the review ends by quoting a description of the Golem from one of Scholem's works. The Golem, on whose forehead is written "emeth" (truth), may be destroyed and returned to clay by erasing the "e," thus becoming "meth," the Hebrew word for death. One Golem, it seems, was fed so much and became so large and dangerous that his owner had to remove his boots to remove the "e," whereupon the Golem turned to clay, collapsed and crushed the Jew. This, says the reviewer, should be an analogy about the relationship of the Jews to Israel. As a socialist, it pains me to cite this as one more example of where the left has failed to come to grips with the Jewish problem, Jewish history and, I might add, the national question in general. Perhaps the best reply to this glib analogy can be found in the words of the late Isaac Deutscher, who wrote in 1954: "I have, of course, long abandoned my anti-Zionism, which was based on a confidence in the European Labor movement or, more broadly, in European society and civilization, which that society and civilization have not justified. If instead of arguing against Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s, I had urged European Jews to go to Palestine, I might have helped to save some of the lives that were later extinguished in Hitler's gas chambers."

REPLY TO MITCHELL COHEN

by Harvey Blume

I would first like to record my respect for Scholem the scholar, whose work opened areas of Jewish history others had pointedly left alone. His studies of mysticism, the Kabbalah and the messianic tradition have implications that have not been fully explored. Nor has the work been written that looks at the events Scholem describes and those described by Christopher Hill in *A World Turned Upside Down*, not as disconnected phenomena but as different manifestations of one revolutionary impulse.

But this is really an aside in relation to the main point of Cohen's letter, which concerns Zionism, and here I would like to highlight rather than minimize our differences.

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Although I am pleased to get information on Scholem's political orientation from Cohen or anyone else, I would not have been ignorant so long had Scholem himself made it available. That doesn't seem too outlandish a request. Granting that Scholem's "chief concern in more recent years has been the internal dynamics of Jewish history and Jewish mysticism," still a book such as *Jews and Judaism in a Time of Crisis* could have given some publicity to his views. Let us recall that this book contains some rather low priority items, the inaugural speech for a computer center, for example, as well as a long interview with Scholem in which it would have been easy to make mention of his politics. If I and no doubt many others assume the worst about those politics, it is partly Scholem's responsibility for not letting us know otherwise. In the case of one who shows such painstaking concern for the needs of contemporary Judaism, it is a serious miscalculation not to think that one of the needs—I would say the greatest—is clarity on the question of Israel and the Palestinians.

It seems that this is where Cohen and I disagree. It disturbs me that my criticism of Israel's relationship to the Palestinians and my concern for what that portends both for Israel and for Jews worldwide evokes a recounting of Zionism's long and varied history.

I am not entirely unfamiliar with that history. But let us please stop fighting old demons. Nowhere in my review did I question Israel's right to exist, by which I understand to mean the right of almost three million Jews who live in the Middle East to remain there free of the threat of extermination and-or displacement. What I meant to suggest and will assert now, is that the danger to Israel is not anybody's questioning its right to exist so much as the consequences of its own militarism.

Zionist history is useful up to a point. But when serious differences within the Zionist camp are reduced to the scale of a disagreement say, between a Johnson and a Goldwater, as to how to pursue a wrong war, and the Goldwater wins, it is time to focus energy on the present. And for all of Israel's mythos about representing an end to the Jew as victim, it is precisely Israeli policy that seems almost perversely designed to land us in that position once again. It is as though we can only learn the wrong things from history. The time to fight was forty years ago. The time for peace is now.

Yes, the left has missed and is still missing the boat on the Jewish question. There is still no Jewish-identified socialist group prepared to take on the issues honestly. On the other hand, the left bears no more responsibility for twentieth-century Jewish history than does the liberal, assimilationist (now Zionist) establishment that has always been an obstacle to understanding that things are urgent.

As for the quote from Deutscher, I am not familiar with it, but I can think of something else he said, in the *Non-Jewish Jew*, that seems much more appropriate. There, to paraphrase, he describes the situation of Israel in terms of a man who jumps out a window to escape the raging fire in his house and lands on someone else's head. Then, instead of explaining or making amends, as would be normal, he continues to beat the one he landed on, although it was not he who set fire to the house.

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LETTERS

From Patrick McGuire:

I would like to address myself to the discussion on "Internal Polemics," *Telos* 31. First, I would like to confirm my support of the journal's direction and especially the areas of concentration proposed for the future. I especially applaud your efforts to concentrate on the problems of bureaucracy, bourgeois hegemony and consideration of aspects of anarchist theory (especially since these same issues resulted in a great deal of friction when I was in graduate school).

I am extremely pleased that your periodical, a constant source of information, ideas and new reference points, has publicly confronted the issue that I find most destructive to your own efforts; the problems of obscurity and aloofness. I would like to add some comments and attempt to reformulate some issues in your discussions from the viewpoints of an interested outsider.

While agreeing with your formulation that clarity is too often identified with simplification and vulgarity (179) and on the centrality of theory as a political act *within the cultural situation of late capitalism* (183), I must press a point: It is indeed the theory that is central; the idea, the process of personalization in the reader, and its effect on his conceptions and politics. What brings on attacks of obscurity and aloofness is not your subject matter. It is the expression of these ideas in a level of discourse, attitudes and strings of tri- and quad-syllabic ideomatic intellectual colloquialisms. The struggle to understand, to "penetrate our reified consciousness" (179) is the struggle to conceptualize. It is not to translate and decipher words or writing styles or wade through the ego espousals of radical bourgeois intellectuals or the attitudes of self-righteousness. The argument, the spontaneity and negativity all are lost, or at best postponed, when one is forced to a dictionary or to re-read a passage several times in order to understand what is read or to bear unconstructive tones before being able to consider the issue or argument in question. Obviously, certain categories and conceptions cannot be simplified. While I may have acquired the intellectual baggage to deal with your journal, I am also in a position to understand and sympathize with those who are interested in "your" ideas, but who do not have such a background. As Rousseau commented several centuries ago, 'Wise men who want to speak to the vulgar in their (wise) own way instead of in a popular way will not be understood! I concur with Breines, it is not just what is said, but "the way things are said" and that the tone of presentations or reviews could easily be interpreted as aloof.

Another strong impediment is the inability of many persons from the anti-intellectual suppressed background of the proletariat to speak numerous languages or to automatically know and follow various debates. Consider introducing an issue or explaining the source and content of a debate in a short note preceding an article. Consider translating footnotes left in the original. Perhaps editorial clarifications are necessary for explaining certain ideas (especially from a non-translated book) or an unknown thesis. It would save time otherwise spent checking around for a review to explain what is going on before returning to the *Telos* article. Clarify what such and such a tradition is. These small steps could increase the readability and readership of your journal without prostituting the theory or ideas under consideration. Call this a result of the uneven intellectual development of capitalist educational tracking or whatever you like, but we are not all immediately on the same planes of understanding, but the searching, inquisitive individual without

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years of intellectual training should not be excluded from the ability to understand the content of forceful arguments presented in *Telos*.

I concede the superiority of your knowledge of Marx, but I am not yet ready to completely throw out the old man and economics. The economic work of men such as O'Connor and Mattick based on Marx's work and categories shows insight into the capitalist system and its hegemony. While I concede that economic crises of capitalism will not "yield a revolution" any more than inverse emiseration theses, they do point to the historically specific conditions of affluence that underride and prop up the cultural hegemony, bureaucratic structure and solidarity of the world capitalist order, which are to be investigated. If we are to retain any single aspect of Marx's thought, the emphasis on totality without systematic exclusion seems to me central, unless you already have a set of answers and are ready to implement them.

The sources of change, when and if they come, will come through the active praxis of social individuals. The role of intellectuals in this process was well stated by Castoriadis in *Telos* 29. The attitude of *Telos* toward the masses does not seem to reflect a great deal of awareness as to class situation and plight, and does not win adherents to your conceptions. After all, the proletariat has not failed us so much as we have "failed them." Aloofness is an attitude and acting in a condescending manner; toward "Sancho Panza's" for example, which can only alienate and reinforce the powerlessness and anti-intellectuality of interested persons of the non-academic sphere of capitalist life.

Criticism of the break or unity with Marx is itself irrelevant for the most part, in that it was decided long ago in your policy and pages. The tradition and framework of your work still springs from Marx as does your scope. Perhaps the best "resolution" is to refer back to Lefort (*Telos* 30, page 192), and consider Marx as a stage in the development of the present. The surpassing of Marx's theories and the alteration of capitalist forms since the time of Marx and, of course, consistent with Marx's writings and spirit. His absolute applicability to all situations should not even be discussed. Obviously, he and his ideas are specific to a phase of historical and theoretic development.

In throwing out Marx, you seem also to have thrown out the eleventh thesis and thus political thought becomes identified with politics. Up to a certain extent, your identification of thought as a radical political act is valid within this historically specific time frame of late capitalism. However, the merit of this conception seems to be contingent upon its politically manifest content, i.e., based on its acceptance by an ever widening audience, or acting to effectively combat the contraction of social knowledge rather than merely speaking among ourselves. Is the aim of your journal to advocate, search for and examine radical conceptions and work toward social change? Or is it merely to remain the last outpost of the radical intellectual tradition?

In almost all instances, radical active groups could benefit from theory and radical conceptions, combatting ahistoricism with historical examples and historically based theories presented in *Telos*. However, rarely is there someone with numerous years of intellectual preparedness and a "professional dedication to intellectuality and revolution"—thereby being able to clarify and enrich these struggles in the daily sphere. Of course, action without theory (deprived of theory?) will not effectively challenge hegemony or create effective change. I fear that your reference to the "absence of a revolutionary agency" (196) as a reason to remain aloof is based on an inversion of the role of an intellectual in the process of change. If this agency could spring forth and be truly radical, it would necessarily have the means to create change

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and the intellectual contribution would be nearer an end. The creation of a basis for such an agency seems more along the liens of the task of the revolutionary intellectual.

At the very point where you should be coming back to earth, you have proposed density and opacity (196) rather than a clarity and a constructive critical spirit that could aid in creating material change. Obfuscation has never led to understanding. Radical theory is at a crisis point; a decision point, but I do not think that increased isolation is a "solution."

In summary, I would like to quote Castoriadis: "Marxists reduce reality by not really considering history, but the history of ideas." The over-emphasis on the history of ideas and primacy of thought in a search for an intellectual base should not obscure or overpower our role as social critics or debunkers of bourgeois mythology, conceptions and culture, nor our attempts to extend the understanding of our theory.

From Lyman H. Legters:

I think there is nothing wrong with editors having it out over policy from time to time and, furthermore, nothing wrong with letting readers in on the process. It may be essential to some or all of you that your journal reside perpetually at the cutting edge of something or other if gratification is to be commensurate with what is assuredly a wearying task. And if that is so, the periodic *Auseinandersetzung* is probably essential, too—although I would be concerned that no editorial group would ever agree for very long about what is to count as the cutting edge.

What concerns me about this particular exchange is the note of impatience that drowns out the substantive discourse. There is probably no journal editor anywhere who would not resoundingly endorse your dismay over poorly written drivel that comes in over the transom. But in all candor, the complaint rings false amidst an exchange that does not itself adhere to the standard you would wish to maintain for the journal. More importantly, by way of criticism, I think I learned more about the writers' digestions than I did about anything of substance that was at issue. Editors are certainly permitted to be dyspeptic at times, but I should find it unfortunate if that were to be confused with either theory or editorial policy.

I merely wish to suggest that those of us who populate the Left, at least at those moments when we fancy that we know where the Left is, have various needful tasks to perform, most of which turn out to be painstaking, slow to mature, and subject to frequent doubts as to their validity. That is true whether one is doing contemporary social criticism, medieval history, or classical literature (and I would have little inclination to favor the first to the detriment of the other two merely because I think the social world needs to be changed). Impatience produces flightiness and that, it seems to me, threatens serious work of all sorts.

If our attempts at rational discourse are subject to cooptation (as I would not deny), I fail to see how the danger is lessened or the situation improved by skipping from one intellectual fashion to another in the manner of bourgeois scholarship.

From John Hyder:

I have an extremely high regard for you and your efforts to inform the American left about the tradition of critical Marxism and contemporary efforts of European theorists. I feel lucky and privileged to have learned about *Telos* and to have been a subscriber for the past three years, and hope to continue to do so for many years to come.

In a recent discussion with an anarchist friend of mine, he voiced the view that it

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might be useful for you to deal with the subject of the traditional anathema of most of the Left for homosexuals. How did this come about? Does this not simply reproduce within the Left itself the very *contempt* for certain groups of human beings necessary for the perpetuation of domination? What about the historical genesis and development of this and similar problems? Frankly, I do not think the varieties of vulgar Marxism could hold a candle to the kind of study of this kind of problem that could come from a "Telosian" perspective. The categories of old left Marxism, such as the base-superstructure distinction, now generally occlude a truthful assessment of almost everything. So why have this problem and others (such as race and sex) been almost completely left out of *Telos*, and thereby left to the popularizers, vulgarizers and opportunists?

Maybe if you did publish some articles dealing specifically with subjects such as those mentioned above, you could get people interested who would otherwise remain indifferent to what you are trying to accomplish. I am thinking especially of people who are or have been in movements directed to those specific problems and who need the kind of insight into them—relating them to the totality—which you could give. On the other hand, I would not suggest conceding theoretical rigor in the interests of gaining a wider readership. It might help, though, to give it a try and see if some of them can be shaken out of their naivete, which can only lead them into blind alleys.

I also think it might be interesting and useful to try to go sometime from a critique of something (e.g., technological rationality, reification, alienation) on an "abstract" level to some kind of understanding of what overcoming this might actually entail. By this I am not calling for utopian blueprints. I do mean, however, thinking about the a actual social conditions that would make this overcoming possible—which would use our imagination, too! Here some historical studies of past social movements, past attempts, the various "not-yets" of history might be useful—and then the link-up with theory. We must never lose sight of the goal, no matter how distant; or rather, we must continually try to catch sight of it.

I must admit that the recent "Internal Polemics" section left me a bit bewildered. Very interested and maybe even enlightened on some things, but still bewildered. I guess I did not expect that disagreements among you were that sharp. Please try to avoid the traditional left tendency (or is it an iron law?) to split up when disagreements arise. I am also wondering how far the apparent reorientation of *Telos* will go. I think Piccone is entirely justified in wanting to investigate other traditions outside Marxism and Critical Theory, but to throw them out altogether seems to me wholly unwarranted. Perhaps I'm just too chicken to take the plunge, but that's how I feel right now. Numerous horrors have been perpetrated by "Marxists"—and the Great Bearded One cannot be absolved from all responsibility—but one must also consider that people operating from within the Marxian tradition have produced some of the most poignant and stinging critiques of such horrors. In fact, it was just this very real and true humanism in Marxism that attracted me—and most of us, I think—to it in the first place. Not to mention its Hegelianism, of course.

From Tom Morris:

I've been re-reading the "internal polemics"—which will have moved on somewhat after September. From a position further outside the various *Telos* Marxisms and anti-Marxisms, my sense is that Marx and what follows still deeply haunt everyone, *still* to the point where what you called "other radical traditions" remain relatively peripheral in the journal of "radical thought." You specify Bakunin (how has he appeared in

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Telos?), Landauer (maybe the book is a beginning), Castoriadis and Lefort. But really, Marxism has always remained the primary subject, even in the harshest negative forms; the anarchist texts, in themselves, have yet to be given the kind of attention Marx has received—although people mysteriously and endlessly note that they've re-examined the anarchists, although where or how I've never been able to discover.

Reich, too, even given his own simplifications and pathologies, seems to remain a footnote (often even uncited) to present radical thought at its best—i.e., when the cold armories of depersonalized social theory don't blast his work into the same graveyards the AMA used.

Thirdly, I'm in agreement with your defense of theory, even given the always necessary objections to it (Breines's hanging on desperately to at least two views in contradiction makes a lot of sense, even if it's crazy to live with this), while I find two things, at least, missing from the theoretical emphasis. *Telos* partakes of a long tradition of implicitly fostering a dissociation in the reader between the "finished" theory (or whatever) he is reading and the quite tumultous lives lived behind the finished product. So often I have the sense (I assume a false sense fostered by the writers I am reading) of the theoretician walking several inches above the earth, referring obliquely to being in a given physical environment, but so obliquely that, for example, even the necessary flight into theory seems to have no physical foundation. I think it can be shown that this has disastrous consequences for theory (e.g., Adorno's fluctuation between a quite disembodied sense of the desiring body and a hostility toward the body, the mentalization and severe distortion of physical experience, the equation of all possibilities of physical experience with degraded materialized experience). So I suggest: more critical reflection in greater touch with lived experience on the consequences of the necessary flight into theory for the theoretical analysis and conclusions themselves, and perhaps a greater interest in the actual dimension of creative and lived experience always lurking around the theory—i.e., an examination of journals, diaries, letters, etc., as the generative foundation of critical thought. I'll permit myself a crude distinction and suggest that this bias derives from the demands of "reading" literature and seems already forgotten when literature and its background become philosophy. The requiems on behalf of the dead "subject" often seem voiced, without acknowledgement, by persons who seem to have become the object of their own theorizing and their own flight into theory alone—it's this lack of acknowledgement, this lack of critical self-reflection that really serves to affirm the subjectlessness so often condemned. It should be acknowledged that the consistencies of the theory (even the consistencies of contradiction) owe something of their existence to the chaotic furies that people actually live, and this dynamic needs to be examined from the beginning in terms of what experience is doing to theory and how theory returns to experience. Theory itself is not at fault, but rather the typically ignored process of being driven into theory and the conceptually abstract in a particular epoch, the process that Klee and Kafka and Kandinsky and Hugo Ball and others document and which Adorno partly understands, but which so many moderns seem to have repressed along with the consequences of this process for their theory.

From Bruce de Vope:

I was delighted to see and read the internal polemics in the last *Telos*. The differences suggest that the debate over the "relevancy of Marxism" is perhaps uncompleted after all.

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At any rate, if such is the case and if you seriously entertain the possibility of ending your "exile in European theory," then I've a proposition you might consider. Allow me to briefly elaborate a context in which to ground this 'proposition.'

1) I'm a member of the North American 'Left,' organizationally affiliated, belonging to a numerically tiny (150) and politically insignificant 'sectlet.'

2) I do not fully accept your position concerning the 'obsolescence of Marxism,' if you will. If I understand you correctly, an employers' offensive in the 1920s, successfully reorganizing the work process, destroyed the internal connection between the point of production and the possibilities for class consciousness. While material prosperity has made possible the transformation of workplace struggle into the privatized pursuit of leisure and consumerism. It's not at all a question of the "existence" of the working class (industrial proletariat), merely one of its irrelevance *vis-à-vis* emancipatory project. Here, then, Marxism can only function ideologically (a systematic false consciousness).

I propose to take issue rather indirectly with you—not so much polemically, i.e., not by criticizing the alleged internal consistency of your position (à la D'Amico), but—by articulating an alternative perspective centered on the real possibility of reuniting Marxism and the "workers' movement."

I wish to ground this perspective experientially, that is, in my own work in community and trade union organizing. And in demonstrating this possibility as real, I also wish to validate, ex post facto, some of those "commonplace" (unscientistic) categories (e.g., falling rate of profit, labor theory of value).

From Saul Birnbaum:

In *Telos* 31, a story about a meeting of some of your editors and others ended with the expression of the possibility of writing about leftist doctrines other than Marxism.

I'm writing this to ask you not to do so for two reasons: first, I derived a great deal of amusement from seeing your writers trying hard to cut to their (your writers') size the giants of Marxism-Leninism (ML); second, you have not yet exhausted all the possibilities of ML or variants of so-called Marxist doctrines.

In regard to the first point, I found it amusing when, in an effort to prove Lenin to be a mechanical or metaphysical materialist, people who spend their lives in books write as if there were no *Philosophical Notebooks* in which Lenin tried to express the essence of dialectics.

But I would rather address myself to getting you to stick to critiques of Marxism (which gives us the *best* "fix" on reality). There will be no fun in reading your writers demolish leftist doctrine other than Marxism because they are so vulnerable. Furthermore, I wish to show you that you haven't yet exhausted the number of variants of Marxism. Let us represent leading Marxists in an abbreviated form as follows: Old Marx—Mo, Young Marx—My, Engels—E, Lenin—L, Stalin—S, Tito—T, Krushchev—K, Brezhnev—B, Mao Tse-tung—Ma. Then the ordered nontuple (ç [sic] members)—Mo, E, L, S, T, K, B, Ma) for example would represent a variant of Marxism which I think is accepted by members of the Progressive Labor Party.

Come to think of it, we should also include Trotsky—Tr. (My apologies to his followers for the almost omission.) In that case, abstractly speaking, it is possible to consider 1,024 variants of Marxism as exemplified by the names given above! Without even bothering to check the back issues of *Telos*, I venture to state that you and your writers have not yet exhausted all these possibilities.

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Not only that, but consider what happens when you include some of the lesser lights like Lukacs, Gorz, etc. The number of variants of Marxism escalates enormously. So I urge you, please stick to Marxism where the action is and let the other non-Marxist doctrines alone. They will all die off of *insufficiencia cardiaca* anyway.

From Steve Light:

I've read the recent *Telos* conference reports with great interest. As always, the conclusions are daring, insightful and intelligent—truthful. Although, as you know, I am not in complete agreement on the question of Adorno—this disagreement, however, actually has to do with the question of the possible "stances" that a radical intellectual can assume today. And, of course, it is precisely this latter problem that will color how one looks at the past—Adorno, for instance. Briefly, when you write that Adorno "fails to indicate how the truth salvaged...can ever be effective again," it seems to me that Adorno is being taken to task merely for lacking a project that has overcome a problem—the effectiveness of truth—that is perhaps insoluble. Further, I believe that this last problem is perhaps more insoluble now than in Adorno's time. Lastly, the very use of the word "effective" strikes me as assuming that there is a "solution" and that it merely must be "found." I think the life of a radical intellectual is much more difficult than this. (If Marxism is to be discarded because it has functioned as a religion, then the religion of "theory and practice" must also go. I believe that the entire drift of Piccone's recent thought includes just such a 'radicality'; yet this use of "effective" seems to hedge a bit.) To continue: I really cannot see how the criticism in the introduction is not merely a jab at Adorno for being without faith. Or a jab at his personal life style—in the total sense of the cultural intellectual objectifications that he presented himself through.

Yet when Piccone writes that "the return to the phenomenological problematic is the salvation of...Hegelian Marxism" because "the communist ideal of a society of free subjects does not take on the character of an unattainable Kantian ideal as in Adorno, but can be grounded, through absolute historicism, in a long-range political project" (*New German Critique* 6, p. 162), I see "absolute historicism" as itself no more than pure faith. Consequently, the adherence to a long-range political project is solely a matter of choice. Now I see nothing wrong with such an adherence, but if it is recognized as a choice "implying no privileged vision of the future," then, frankly, what does this have over Adorno other than a slightly more 'objectified' disassociation with authority (and this depending on the form of this objectification)?

So, if the Telosian contrast to Adorno's "failure to be effective" *vis-à-vis* truth is said to be "the modest political goal to stimulate the growth of a critical intelligentsia able to engage in this type of discourse and thus able to provide potentially emancipatory solutions to the particular crises" I frankly don't see how this is *qualitatively* different or superior. And it should be remembered that critical theory did stimulate just such a critical intelligentsia.

Implied in Piccone's remarks on critical theory is that its conscious "hermeticism" damaged its ability to address the question of making truth effective. Then what is offered as a contrast is a project seeking to vindicate the emancipatory moment in theoretical discourse and in this way stimulate the growth of a critical intelligentsia. But I don't think the question of 'hermeticism' is the really crucial one when it comes to vindicating the emancipatory moment—or: a conscious hermeticism actually furthers the cause. Further: the stimulation of a critical intelligentsia again is not

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hampered by the question of hermeticism. The remarks also indicate that a goal for the journal should be for it to be a 'theoretical conscience.' But how is a theoretical conscience an answer to the question of 'making truth effective'? And how is a theoretical conscience any different than the Frankfurt School's goal of saving the truth? Further: given *Telos's* heterogeneity on all levels, it seems to me that the very goal of being a theoretical conscience is hampered. A small, cohesive unit has a better chance at keeping this conscience razor sharp.

This again is not a criticism of the goal: I think the notion of a theoretical conscience and the vindication of the emancipatory moment in theoretical discourse are not only viable projects, but also *laudable*. I also think the discussion of these and of *Telos* as a 'project' is to be welcomed. What I am questioning, however, is how these stated projects can in any way function as critiques of the Frankfurt School. The problems of the what, the how and the why of thinking and doing that concern radical intellectuals are today more difficult than ever. Hence the very thinking of these problems in terms of the categories of success or failure *vis-à-vis* history or the revolution, etc., misses the absolute pathos of the present situation. In a world where thought and truth have been almost completely extinguished the problems of the radical intellectual contain an unheard of risk.

The categories of success and failure in relation to history and the revolution should be discarded because they in no way touch the very things that animate our actual lives. Living and thinking truthfully are things that can be evaluated: that is the very animus of thought to begin with. But along this completely different path of measurement—one's relation to the Frankfurt School must become more capable of containing real empathy. If we choose to live and think differently than Adorno it is because we recognize ourselves more thoroughly in "another" deployment.

From Peter Uwe Hohendahl:*

Mit gespanntestem Interesse, freilich auch mit Besorgnis habe ich den Bericht von der *Telos* Tagung im Frühjahrsheft gelesen. Ich bedaure sehr, dass ich an der Tagung selbst nicht teilgenommen habe. Jedenfalls halte ich den Versuch bzw. die Absicht, den Marxismus als überflüssiges Marschgepäck endgültig über Bord zu werfen, um radikal zu bleiben, für verhängnisvoll. Dies ist nicht der Ort für eine ausführliche Auseinandersetzung mit den angeführten Argumenten, doch möchte ich aussprechen, dass ich die Fragen und Einwände von D'Amico und Grahl teile. Der Vorschlag, den

*English translation: "It was with great interest, albeit also apprehension, that I read the account of the *Telos* meeting held at the beginning of the year. I regret very much that I myself did not participate in it. At any rate, I regard it as dangerous to attempt or to intend to throw Marxism overboard as some kind of superfluous baggage. This is not the place for a detailed confrontation with the specific arguments, but I still would cast my lot with the questions and objections of D'Amico and Grahl. The attempt to abolish Marxism just because one stage in it is no longer adequate for reality is an abstract conclusion. And even the detailed answer to the objections won't budge me from this position. I am in agreement with the position that we cannot remain bound to the literal interpretation of Marx and that the world of 1977 cannot be grasped by a theory that is a good hundred years old. I am also in agreement with the opinion that the social theories of the Frankfurt School, of Kosik or Merleau-Ponty contain certain expansions and corrections of Marxian theory—but always in the framework of a Marxism that understands itself historically. Therefore, they should not be mentioned in the same breath as bourgeois theorists such as Simmel, Husserl and Weber. That does not mean that these theorists should be ignored, but rather that they should be the object of critical confrontation. And herein, it seems to me, lies the superiority of Western Marxism over the Eastern variety—that it can confront the most advanced bourgeois theories."

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Marxismus abzuschaffen, weil eine bestimmte Stufe des marxistischen Denkens der Wirklichkeit gegenüber nicht mehr angemessen ist, wäre eine abstrakte Schlussfolgerung. Und auch die ausfürhliche Antwort auf die Einwände will mich nicht beruhigen. Einverstanden bin ich mit der Position, dass wir nicht bei dem Buchstaben von Marx stehen bleiben können und die Welt von 1977 mit einer Theorie erfassen können, die gut hundert Jahre alt ist. Einverstanden bin ich auch mit der Meinumg, dass die Gesellschaftstheorien der Frankfurter Schule, von Kosik oder Merleau-Ponty wichtige Ergänzungen und Korrekturen der Marxschen Theorie enthalten. Aber eben im Rahmen eines selbst wieder historisch verstandenen Marxismus. Deshalb sollten sie auch nicht in einem Atemzug genannt werden mit bürgerlichen Theoretikern wie Simmel, Husserl und Weber. Was nicht heisst, dass deren Theoreme nicht der Beachtung wert sind, nämlich als Gegenstand der kritischen Auseinandersetzung. Eben darin scheint mir der westliche Marxismus dem östlichen überlegen zu sein, dass er sich an den avanciertesten bürgerlichen Theorien reiben kann.

From Andrew Arato and Paul Piccone:

The "Introduction" to *Telos* 32 contained an unnecessary and unwarranted manhandling of Jay's article on the totality and his reply to the original review of Perry Anderson's work. If *Telos* is to be a generally non-sectarian journal allowing a variety of divergent views in its pages, then it does not help to specify in the introduction that "every single *Telos* editor" rejected the article. After all, it should be well known by now, after the polemics with Jacoby and Schmidt, that Jay is *not* an orthodox *Teloser*. Yet his range of interests definitely falls within the scope of *Telos* and his views should be treated respectfully as those of a concerned colleague—even if a dissenting one. Consequently, we deplore the general tone of the introduction and hope that nothing of the sort will happen in the future.

Poems by Wolf Biermann
Two Interviews with Wolf Biermann
Peter U. Hohendahl: Introduction to Reception Aesthetics
Karel Kosík: Historism and Historicism
Arthur Mitzman: Anarchism, Expressionism, and Psychoanalysis
Otto Gross: Protest and Morality In the Unconscious
Silvia Bovenschen: Is There a Feminine Aesthetics?
Ferenc Fehér: The Last Phase of Romantic Anti-Capitalism
Russell Berman: Lukács' Critique of Bredel and Ottwalt
Wolfgang Emmerich: The Red One-Mark Novel and the "Heritage of Our Time"
Jack Zipes: Wolf Biermann's Double Allegiance and Double Bind
Wolfgang Müller: Review of Alexander Stephan's *Christa Wolf*
Paul Piccone: Review of Gwyn A. Williams' *Proletarian Order*

#8 contains the following
Rob Burns: West German Intellectuals and Ideology
Wolf-Dieter Narr: Threats to Constitutional Freedom in the FRG
Juergen Seifert: Defining the Enemy of the State in West Germany
David Bathrick, Andreas Huyssen: Mauser as Learning Play
Heiner Mueller: Mauser

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REVIEWS:

Agnes Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*. London: Allison & Busby, 1976. 130 pages.

The appearance of Heller's *Theory of Need in Marx* is of great significance for the remnants of an anti-authoritarian left that has become critical of Marxism because a version of the theory serves as the legitimating ideology for authoritarian regimes. First, because its author is critical of all official Marxisms and statist societies; second, because she seriously studies Marx in order to articulate what is still valid and worth preserving in his theory. Her work stems from the awareness that the negative aspects of the Marxist tradition cannot be abstractly overcome by identifying Marx's project with Marxist dogma and rejecting both. What she calls for is a self-critique of Marxism which is aware of Marx's limits in order to resume the theory's normatively valid "truth content" still able to inform theoretical and practical efforts towards emancipation. Thus, rather than *cede* the Marxist heritage to statist ideologists, and thereby *deprive* the left of its critical edge, her work delegitimates Marxist ideologists by focusing on what in Marx's project remains a fertile utopia (p. 130). Unlike the politically sterile Marxology prevalent in France and Germany, however, Heller's concern is not to "save Marx" by abstracting an acceptable "science" of capitalism from his work. Rather, she returns to Marx's theory of need in order to repose the problem of the relation between theory and truly radical praxis suppressed in recent Marx-interpretations.

To be sure, Heller is not the first to turn to a Marxist theory of need, although her book is the only one that systematically analyzes the concept in Marx's writings. Both Gorz (*Strategy for Labor*) and Marcuse (*Essay on Liberation, Counterrevolution and Revolt*) rely on Marx's theory of need, and for very similar reasons: the crisis of the Marxian theory of class. Gorz and Marcuse argue that advanced capitalism's ability to meet the population's material needs within the framework of an imposed consumerism radically undermines the formerly explosive contradiction between the working class' "vital needs" and relations of capitalist production.[1] In short, both see the immiseration thesis as the once but no longer valid basis for the proletariat's revolutionary character. They maintain that the struggle to satisfy their immediate material needs neither poses a radical threat to the capitalist system nor provides an impulse to revolutionary action.[2]

Since they both reject Leninist solutions Marcuse and Gorz turn to the theory of need for an alternative. Arguing that Marx's original designation of the proletariat as the revolutionary agent was based on the presupposition that workers developed *quantitative* needs which capitalism could not satisfy, Marcuse and Gorz attempt to locate new *qualitative* needs, generated in advanced capitalism, around which to organize radical groups struggling for change. Despite their disagreements as to which groups develop these needs, the key criterion is the non-satisfiability of qualitatively new needs within capitalist social relations: the need for creative activity and

1. Cf. André Gorz, *Strategy for Labor*, (Boston 1964), pp. 21-23, p. 64; and André Gorz, "Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor," *Telos 12* (Summer 1972); Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969) and Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, (Boston 1972).

2. It is irrelevant in this context whether the working class is defined as the blue collar modern proletarians (Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, p. 38) or as modern technicians (Gorz in *Telos 12*) or both. The point being made is that material or consumer needs (quantitative needs) can be satisfied within capitalism and are accordingly not a radical threat to the system.

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meaningful work, the need for fellowship, freedom, full and many-sided development of faculties, autonomy, a new aesthetic sensibility, etc.[3]

At first glance, Heller's analysis seems scarcely different from that of Marcuse and Gorz. However, Heller does not follow Marcuse and Gorz in designating "quantitative consumer needs" as false (Marcuse) or passive and alienated (Gorz), as opposed to radical *qualitative needs*. On closer look, the argument that needs which capitalism cannot satisfy at any given point are radical is fundamentally arbitrary and untenable. While capitalism may not be able to satisfy all quantitative needs which are in principle infinite, some of the qualitative needs are clearly satisfiable within capitalism. This accounts for the total lack of consistency on the part of Marcuse and Gorz in asserting now the new working class, now the proletariat, or perhaps women, blacks, and students, as the bearers of radical needs and as the revolutionary subjects. The problem lies in their attempt to merely adapt the Marxian theory of need and class to contemporary conditions. Instead of seriously re-examining the original theory of need and its relation to the theory of class, they uncritically sought to reproduce Marx's mode of theorizing and to find a new revolutionary subject with new radical needs.

Because she wishes to retain the concept of radical need while avoiding any *ad hoc* categorization from the arbitrary standpoint of their satisfiability within capitalism, Heller undertakes a re-examination of Marx's theory of need. Moreover, by considering the theory of need *independently* of the theory of class, she takes the first crucial step toward a reevaluation of the class theory on theoretical rather than on historical grounds. Any classificatory analysis of needs presupposes a *philosophically elaborated value-concept of need* which alone can provide the basis for an evaluation of needs (p. 38). Accordingly, she systematically unfolds the relation of the theory of need to the normatively based philosophy of history as the unifying thread of Marx's project.

On the basis of an earlier work[4] that analyzes in depth Marx's ultimate value presuppositons, Heller stresses the crucial role of the value of "human abundance" in Marx's interrelated theories of need, objectification, and alienation. It concerns "the free development of all the capacities and senses of the human being, the free and many-sided activity of every individual. Need as a category of value is none other than need for this kind of wealth" (p. 38). When associated with the vision of a future communist society, this concept of rich and many-sided human needs provides the normative basis for Marx's evaluation of the capitalist system of needs. Thus, instead of deriving the need for free self-development from the workers' ambiguous demands for "meaningful work" (Gorz); instead of seeking to ground radical needs in residual instinctual resistence to repression (Marcuse), Heller seeks to discover the philosophical presuppositions for the concept of radical needs.

Both the concept of "human essence," that links the predicates of universality, sociality, consciousness, and self-activity to the concept of humanity, and the theory of objectification that roots the development of "human essence" in the active appropriation and formation of social life by historically situated individuals are future-directed *value concepts*[5] whose foundations rest on their practical realization

3. Gorz, *Strategy for Labor, op. cit.*, pp. 12-13; Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, pp. 47-49 and *Essay on Liberation, op. cit.*, pp. 23-49.

4. Agnes Heller, *Towards a Marxist Theory of Value* (Southern Illinois 1972) passim.

5. For an excellent discussion of the concept of human essence in Marx, see György Markus, "Human Essence and History" (*International Journal of Sociology*, Vol IV No. 1, Spring 1974).

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within an emancipated society (pp. 46-48). Together, they enable Marx to formulate the concept of alienation, and to incorporate it into a future-directed philosophy of history. When viewed in terms of the constitution and unfolding of human capacities through objectifications, history must perforce appear as alienation, for clearly the moment of self-realization concomitant with the concept of objectification can not be applied to the masses of unfree and limited individuals who have been the human "actors" of the past. Alienation, therefore, does not imply the projection of subjectivity or teleology onto history as a whole. Rather, alienation is comprehensible only in relation to the value concept of need, and the theory of genesis of needs—objectification. As such, alienation refers to the split between the development of productive capacity, cultural values, and needs, *for the species as a whole* and the individual's impoverished, one-sided development. This tension between species and individual development, between cultural wealth and individual impoverishment, is indicative of alienation both for past history and, in its most extreme form, for capitalism (p. 46).

On the basis of the link between Marx's philosophy of history and his theory of need, Heller demystifies the concept of "survival needs" that still plague the work of both Gorz and Marcuse. The argument that needs are historical is pivotal to the view that the abolition of alienation is objectively possible. If needs were biologically *given* there could be no transformation of the structure of need that is the prerequisite for an emancipated society. Accordingly, Heller insists that for Marx, despite his confusing distinctions between "natural," "physiological" and "socially produced" needs, *the genesis of need* is always an historically and culturally mediated act. According to Heller, despite his various classifications, *Marx had no concept of survival needs as a general group of needs* independent of history and culture: the notion of "natural" physiological needs must be seen only as a limiting concept beyond which no life can be sustained and thus cannot function as a criterion for the evaluation of needs.

By interpreting Marx's concept of "natural needs" as the "existential limit to the satisfaction of need," Heller simultaneously avoids the charge of elitism (she is well aware that the continued struggle for mere survival constitutes radical needs in many countries), as well as the false asceticism that employs a vulgar materialist concept of need to attack the so-called materialism or consumerism of advanced capitalist countries. Although it is possible to engage in an asceticist critique of the capitalist structure of need, she shows that this is not the basis of Marx's critique. The historical genesis of all needs precludes the arbitrary classification into "natural" and "luxury" groups of needs. The latter has meaning only in reference to those needs whose satisfaction exceeds the majority's effective demand—it is a descriptive rather than a philosophical concept. The thrust of Marx's critique of the capitalist system of need was not aimed at the emergence of "luxury needs," (which Marx never considered false), but rather at the *limitation* of the development of many-sided needs to particular social strata, and above all, at the reduction of the needs and even the "senses" of disadvantaged groups (the workers) to the barest minimum. The fetishism involved in the reduction of individuals to workers (*homo economicus*) is thus paralleled by the reduction of his needs to the so-called survival level through the agencies of capitalist market and cultural relations. Together with the historical genesis of need, the concept of human abundance constitutes a critique of the fetishization of needs as second nature (p. 32). In other words, it is the historical specificity of capitalism rather than the structure of human nature or the struggle for survival that generates the fetishistic concept of a group of "natural needs."

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This does not mean that Heller is willing to abandon the concept of manipulated or alienated needs. On the contrary, she praises Marx for having been the first to articulate a theory of the alienation and manipulation of needs (p. 51). Rather than attempting to identify "true" as opposed to "false" needs, Heller shows that the concept of alienation of needs does remain meaningful as long as it is only applied to the *totality of the structure of need of a given society*, and not to a specific group of needs (p. 28). With Marx, she argues that every society has its characteristic *system of needs*, which is intimately related to the prevalent structure of production. Because individuals are not monads, their needs cannot be analyzed in isolation from these two structures. This means, moreover, that the evaluation of the capitalist structure of need can not be carried out by opposing natural and luxury needs, or quantative vs. qualitative needs, but only from the standpoint of the value concept of need. Heller shows that Marx's genius lay in relating the system of need to the capitalist system of production. The self-interested egoistic individuality which interacts with others only through competition, described by Hegel, is revealed by Marx to be historically specific to capitalist social relations. The basic feature of the capitalist mode of production, insofar as needs are concerned, is the subordination of individuals' needs to production requirements. But even this apparent indictment of capitalism is not unambiguous since Marx also praises capitalism for its "civilizing" tendency, i.e., for making production for surplus value its driving principle and thereby breaking through precisely those social forms in which production is limited by the satisfaction of the existing narrow framework of need.[6] Consequently, the critique of the capitalist system of need can not refer simply to the severence of production from the direct satisfaction of needs, but must be located in its *antinomic character*.

Heller discusses in depth the antinomies between freedom and necessity, necessity and change, teleology and causality, inherent in the specific nature of the capitalist mode of production as analyzed by Marx (p. 81). The fundamental antinomy of the system of needs is the opposition between capitalism's development of the highest level of enrichment and expansion of needs and capacities so far, along with the *peak* of individual impoverishment (p. 46). On the one hand, by generalizing the commodity relation, by orienting production to the expansion of value, and by creating a purely class society, capitalism *frees needs from their embeddedness* in the rigid social hierarchies of the past which allocated needs (not just the possibility of their satisfaction) according to caste, estate, etc. For the first time, individuals are no longer excluded *in principle* from the wealth of needs—the accidental character of class membership allows for the development of needs of all kinds in the poorest of men and women.[7] On the other hand, *capitalism as a social relation limits the enrichment of needs which it has itself created*. It does so, according to Heller by imposing a social division of labor that reproduces poverty for the working classes, and by subordinating and ultimately restricting the development of productive forces to the demands of value expansion.

It is this antinomic structure of capitalist development that provides the basis for the argument that the realization of human abundance is objectively possible. Marx knew quite well that under the exigencies of value expansion, the principle of production for its own sake leads to the sacrifice of individual needs to the development of the forces of production. But at the same time, by breaking down the "natural" local and

6. Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse* (London 1973) p. 410.
7. Heller, *Towards a Marxist Theory of Value, op. cit.*, p. 18.

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national barriers to the development of these forces, (the all-sided unfolding of natural and mental capacities, the expansion of needs) he argued that capitalism creates *within alienation* the condition for the development of the many-sided individuality as an end in itself.[8] Unlike Marcuse who identifies the objective possibility for human enrichment with the abolition of scarcity, Heller shows that although Marx sided with progress in material production, the *sine qua non* for emancipation is not related abstractly to the aboliton of scarcity but to the transformation of the capitalist division of labor (p. 98). Since for Marx the capitalist social division of labor is a key force perpetuating alienation, the possibility of transforming this division is a basic criterion for changing the structure of need. Marx, of course, rejects the leveling of needs associated with the idea of primitive communism as an alternative to the capitalist division of labor. Nevertheless, he also rejects the vulgar capitalist identification of wealth as mere having and sees the development of the productive forces primarily as a precondition for the emergence of "true human wealth" defined not in terms of goods but of free time. As Heller aptly puts it: "The true wealth of society is realized through the free self-activity of social individuals and through their qualitatively many-sided system of needs. The true wealth of man and society consists not in labor time but in *free time*" (p. 104). Whether labor within a qualitatively transformed realm of necessity can be considered free species activity (the *Grundrisse* model), or whether self-realization is limited to the realm of freedom distinct from material production (*Capital*, Vol III model), the crucial condition for the abolition of alienation both of labor and needs remains the transformation of the capitalist social division of labor and not unlimited material wealth.[9] Consequently, the objective possibility for emancipation does not mean the total aboliton of material scarcity (which is always relative), but the possibility of freeing individuals from alienated structures of labor without renouncing technological development.

Without going into a discussion of Heller's analysis of the different models of communism in various Marx texts, it is sufficient to reiterate that, since because Marx always understands the future society as qualitatively different from capitalism (by abolishing the split between individual and species development) the move from capitalism to communism cannot be understood simply in terms of economic development. For Heller, the antinomy within Marx's own work between an objectivistic model of transition (based on the contradiction between socialized forces of production and relations of production), and a model of transition (contingent upon the emergence of radical needs in individuals freely constituting themselves into a collectivity consciously striving for the realization of communism) must be resolved in favor of the latter. The only transformation that is philosophically consistent both with the theory of need and human abundance, is that grounded in the struggle around radical needs that consciously breaks through the capitalist structure of need and labor.

What constitutes Heller's most important contribution to the theory of alienation of need is her analysis of the *mediation* between the capitalist system of need and the structure of production through the category of *interest*. Whereas the subordination of

8. Cf. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value, Vol II* (Moscow 1968), pp. 117-118. See also *The Grundrisse*, p. 410.

9. The theme of the transformation of the capitalist division of labor appears in Marx as early as the *1844 Manuscripts* and is never abandoned. For an interesting discussion of this problem as regards the late works, see P.A. Rovati, "The Critique of Fetishism in Marx's *Grundrisse*" (*Telos 17* Fall 1973) pp. 56-70.

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individual satisfaction to the value-expansion of capital is a sign of alienation, Heller demonstrates that *it is the integration of need into an interest structure that expresses the* differentia specifica *of the capitalist system of need alienation.* The limitation of the *satisfaction* of needs to effective market demand is only the most obvious aspect of this problematic. In order to understand the process through which the quantification, homogenization, instrumentalization and reduction of needs occurs, one must analyze the structuration of needs into opposing interests in modern society.

As Heller notes, it is no accident that only modern bourgeois philosophy and economic theory developed the category of interest as a general category of motivation, for this concept most clearly defines the system of needs within modern civil society (p. 59). The concept of interest associates rational calculation with efforts to satisfy needs. For theorists of civil society from Hobbes to Hegel, the category of interest comes between needs and their object, to express the way in which the self-responsible, but isolated individual must constitute his needs in the absence of communal guarantees. The structuration of needs into private calculable interests of the egoistic individual who confronts others in the competitive struggle for satisfaction is taken to be a "natural" feature of individuality. As a motive for action, then, interest logicaly implies both the opposition between particular and general interest, defined respectively as self preference vs. concern for society as a whole, as well as the antagonism between particular interests of different individuals.

It is this structure of antagonism between fragmented particularity and abstract universality that Hegel describes as the system of needs specific to modern civil Society. But while he severs himself from the natural law tradition by historicizing this structure of needs and relating it to its obvious counterpart—the competitive structure of capitalist market relations—he nevertheless remains within the same problematic by seeking to reconcile particular and universal interest through a series of mediating institutions which preserve rather than abolish the interest structure or the system of needs. Hegel too identifies free individuality with bourgeois individuality, accepting the system of need of civil society as the unavoidable consequence of the dissolution of rigid familial and communal ties.

Far from embracing the problematic of particular-general interest, characteristic of all "bourgeois" philosophy, however, "Marx shows his outstanding genius when with a single move he dispenses not only with the solution but with the whole formulaton of the problem" (p. 59). Instead of opposing general interest to particular interest as his bourgeois predecessors and Marxist followers, Marx considered them to be two sides of the same coin, rooted in the structure of civil society that opposes bourgeois to citizen, and in the market relations that *posti* egoistic subjects privately pursuing their self-interest. In short, for Marx, "interest" as a motive for action, whether particular or general, is the expression of the alienation of need specific to capitalism—of the transformation of need into the egoistic, quantifiable, calculable greed of interest relations. As such, it is no accident that calculation is consciously applied only to the satisfaction of particular interests, just as in production, from the standpoint of the individual capitalist, it is applied solely to his particular requirements for the expansion of value and not to the production requirements of society as a whole. The general interest, regarding both need in general and production in general, is not a motive of the individual, but procedes as it were, "behind the backs of these self-reflected particular interests, behind the back of one individual's interest in opposition to that of the other."

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The opposition between bourgeois and citizen, between the egoism and particularity of the individual concerned with his private self-interest, and the universalistic moralizing, self-sacrificing "general interest" motivating the citizen, constitutes a double abstraction and alienation of individual needs. According to Marx, however, the critics of civil society, the communists, distance themselves from this problematic: "...because they alone have discovered that the 'general interest' is created by individuals who are defined as 'private persons.' They know that this contradiction is only a seeming one because one side of it, the so-called 'general,' is constantly being produced by the other side, private interest, and by no means opposes the latter as an independent force with an independent history."[10] Thus as Heller argues, if the alternative to this anarchic situation cannot be the planning of the "general interest," but only the abolition of the interest structure itself, one can no longer support a concept of socialism defined by central planning in Marx's name.[11] Only a radical transformation of the system of needs, and not simply the extension of calculation from private to public interests through economic planning agencies, could free individuals from the alienation of need.

The crucial importance of the identification of the interest structure as the alienated structure of need specific to capitalism lies in the necessary conclusion that the "general interest," *even if posited in the form of class interest*, cannot be a motive of a class struggle that moves beyond capitalist society. To be sure, Marx's theory of class did indeed seek to envisage motivations that could lead the proletariat to struggle for emancipation from capitalist structures. These motivations, however, were not comprehended by Marx as interests, but as *radical needs*. Only radical needs constitute in Marx's work the impetus to revolutionary praxis, since only radical needs are able to challenge the capitalist system of need—i.e., the interest structure. Heller argues that it was an alternative to bourgeois relations: "One may search in vain for the concept of 'class interest' in works such as the *Grundrisse, Capital, Wages Price and Profit*, or *Theories of Surplus Value*: it does not appear even once, not even with reference to class struggle" (p. 60). Or, to put it more precisely, where the concept of class interest does appear in these works, it is as the concept expressing the alienation of need and never the transcendence of this alienation (p. 60).

Thus, the concept of radical need gains its importance in opposition to the interest structure of capitalist society. From the earliest writings through *Capital*, Marx consistently associated the revolutionary thrust of the proletariat with its potential to develop radical needs. Moreover, it is through the use of the concept of radical need, rather than interest, that Marx specifies the relation between theory and praxis. The crucial discussion occurs in the "Introduction" to the *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. In response to the question as to how theory can grip the masses, Marx states that "Theory is actualized in a people only insofar as it actualizes their

10. Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family* (London 1956) p. 267. (Quoted in Heller, *The Theory of Need in Marx*, p. 62.

11. For a fuller discussion of this point, see Agnes Heller and Ferenc Feher, "Forms of Equality," *Telos* 32 (Summer 1977). To be sure, Marx associates the term "interest" with revolution when discussing the dynamics of bourgeois revolutions in which the particular interest of a socio-economic class appear to be the general interest of all of society. But the outcome of these revolutions is precisely the imposition of interest relations on the expression of needs and thus the universalization of competitive relations between individuals and classes involving the alienation of need. Clearly it would be illogical to envision a proletarian revolution against bourgeois society to be a revolution in the name of interest rather than need. This would be to impose the logic of bourgeois revolutions on all revolution.

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needs... Only a revolution of radical needs can be a radical revolution."[12] The proletariat as a radical class fits into this framework as a class that develops radical needs, seeking to abolish alienation. The proletariat is: "a class with *racial chains*, a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society... a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no *particular right* because no particular wrong but wrong in general is perpetuated against it."[13] The importance of this conception for the theory of need is neither the link between radical needs and radical chains nor the attribution of universality to the proletariat by virtue of universal suffering. Rather, the crucial distinction in this passage is the one made between *particular right*, i.e., interest, and radical need. That Marx was forced to *project* radical needs onto the proletariat, the fact that he mistakenly saw the working class as the exclusive bearer of radical needs with no interests to affirm within capitalism, does not, for Heller, detract from the importance of the theory of need in itself (pp. 86, 95). For although it is obvious that the working class *always* had particular interests to affirm *within* civil society, it nevertheless remains the case that only a radical transformation of both the structure of labor and the structure of need can lead to the emancipation of workers along with the rest of society. Thus, instead of identifying radical need with radical oppression, as do Marcuse and Gorz, making it the basis for the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, Heller severs the theory of radical needs from the class theory and demonstrates that the only valid concept of radical need in the framework of civil society is need that points beyond the interest structure.

Unlike Marx, however, for Heller it remains an open question whether the working class will develop radical needs (p. 89). Nevertheless, the orientation of theory to needs, and the distinction between need and interest, remain the crucial insights of Marx's theory. For it follows from Heller's analysis of Marx that any theory focusing on *class interests* must remain at best reformist and at worst manipulative. To refer to *class interest* (as do most official Marxisms) as the supposed alternative to the opposition of particular and general interest characterizing bourgeois society, is to remain within the capitalist world of alienated need structures (p. 63). In other words, theory that relates to class interests can only address class struggles that do not point beyond capitalism because struggles around interests are incapable of transcending the fetishization of needs. On the other hand, the manipulative possibilities of the concept of interest become apparent as soon as one realizes that only on the basis of the category of interest could one argue that members of a class *do not know* their (general) interests because of their submersion in competitive particularity. It is only through the dynamics of the concept of class-interest that one could substitute the party (with privileged access to the knowledge of truth, i.e., general class interest) for the self-consciousness of the individual, as the elite guardian of the revolutionary struggle. This relationship is as old as the Jacobin interpretations of Rousseau's concept of the general will. No wonder that the Leninist vanguard thought of itself in Jacobin terms. The consequences of this approach sould be clear. Indeed, one of the most telling interpretations of Soviet Society is the view that it is Jacobinism in permanence. The fact is, however, that such logistics are impossible with the concept of radical need, for the concept of need is inherently democratic and self-legislating.

12. Karl Marx, "Contribution of a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" (*Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 3, New York 1975) p. 183 (Quoted in Heller, *Ibid.*, p. 89.)

13. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

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For, there are no needs that are not conscious needs. Either one has and is conscious of radical needs, and is willing to struggle with others for their realization, or one does not. No one, neither a party nor a theorist can claim to have better knowledge of the needs of an individual than the individual himself. By demonstrating that Marx considered solely *needs* and theory that relates to needs, to be radical, Heller has grasped what remains valid in Marx's critical orientation and what must inform any non-authoritarian theory and praxis today.

Despite the penetrating character of her analysis, however, there are two issues regarding which Heller does not go far enough. The first concerns Marx's theory of class. Heller has certainly distanced herself from the dogma of the necessity and exclusivity of the emergence of the proletariat as the revolutionary subject. However, the problem with the theory of the proletariat does not lie in the conception of the revolutionary potential of workers, but in the projection of radical needs onto the concept of the proletariat *as a class.* Indeed, Heller herself has argued that only individuals have needs. It is meaningless therefore to speak of the radical needs of classes as such—a class can have only interests. But by demonstrating that Marx consistently sought to locate the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in its development into a *class with radical needs,* Heller inadvertantly touches upon the fundamental *antinomy not of bourgeois society but of Marx's theory itself.* This is the antinomy between the philosophy of praxis (that centers around the category of radical need) and the theory of class.

Marx, of course, knew quite well that "class" (as a socio-economic category) is a product of bourgeois society: "As to myself, no credit is due me for discovering either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to demonstrate: 1) that the *existence of classes* is merely linked to *particular historical phases in the development of production*..."[14] And, it is clear from his writings that the integration of the individual into a class, especially into the working class, entails the abstraction not only of his activity, but of his needs and of his personality as well. Over and over again Marx argued that as a member of a class, the individual is rendered banal and abstract. In modern civil society, class membership, from the standpoint of the individual, is a *subsumption,* an objective necessity inherent in the reproductive logic of capital, and parallel to the subordination of the individual to the division of labor. The clearest statement of this position is in *The German Ideology*: "It follows from all we have been saying up to now that the *communal relation* into which the individuals of a class entered, *and which was determined by their common interests* as against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals belonged only as *average individuals*..."[15] It follows from Marx's theory of need, however, that radical needs cannot be averaged (p. 34). The reduction and abstraction of need is, as Heller argues, a function of the structure of interest. But it should be added that this structure of interest *is by definition a class structure*! In other words, to belong to a class is the sign of the domination of the division of labor, market forces, and production imperatives: in

14. See the March 5, 1952 letter of Marx to Weydemeyer in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1955), p. 64.

15. Karl Marx, *The Germany Ideology,* in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 5, p. 80, emphasis added.

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short, of the structure of interest over the individual. Class (as a socio-economic category of domination) and interest mutually imply each other.

On the other hand, Marx assumed that the proletariat was a unique class because it could develop not interests, but the radical need to abolish class society. His class theory of revolution is thus not a theory of interest, but of the transcendence of the interest structure by communities fused together through struggles around radical needs. *He never became aware of the logical inconsistency of constructing need as a predicate of class.* In our view, Marx's confusion flows from the double collapse of the philosophy of praxis that identified the proletariat as a group with radical needs due to total alienation, (as the negation of the negation—a philosophical construct, not a class concept), with the sociological category of the working class, and of both with the structural category of wage labor. In short, the philosophical determinants of the proletariat (the theory of radical needs and radical praxis) comes into conflict with Marx's critique of political economy and the class analysis associated with it.

Certainly many Marxists, including Heller, have recognized the most obvious form of this antinomy, i.e., the opposition between the theory of historical materialism that posits history in terms of the deterministic logic of contradiction between forces and relations of production, and history as the history of class struggle—contingent upon the free development of consciousness and struggle of oppressed individuals.[16] However, although Marx abandons the deterministic theory of historical materialism in his late writings (switching over to a non-evolutionistic theory of discontinuous social formations), the antinomy between necessity and freedom reappears there in a new form. Briefly, the theory of economic development, unfolded in *Capital*, that links empirical classes (wage laborers, owners of capital) to categories of production (categories of the value theory: wage labor and capital), *establishing class development and antagonism* as a necessary moment of the reproductive logic of capital accumulaton, comes into conflict once more with the philosophy of praxis as an open-ended philosophy of history that insists on the freedom of self-constitution of individuals into communities struggling around radical needs. Marx sought to mediate this antinomy between economic analysis and the philosophy of praxis, between objective development and subjective enlightenment, with the concept of class. The proletariat replaces Hegel's bureaucracy as the "universal class," as the force that mediates the antagonisms of particularity in civil society by fusing competitive individuals into a conscious community that struggles for the abolition of the oppositional structure of civil society. But Marx's critique of the concept of mediation in Hegel, (a concept that reconciles contradictions without resolving them) can be turned against Marx himself.[17] Both for Hegel and Marx it is the *concept of class* that reproduces internally the fundamental antinomy, in Marx's case precisely the antinomy between the determinism of the economic analysis of capital and the theory of radical need. This becomes evident as soon as one questions Marx's

16. See for example Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York 1971) pp. 67-121.

17. Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 88. From the beginning, Marx separated himself from the Hegelian concept of mediation, which reconciles contradictions within the same framework in which they exist. This, to Marx, is a trick of logic. He argues that the logic of mediation preserves contradictions by transposing them to ever higher levels without overcoming them. This logic is reproduced by Marx in *Capital*, but in the form of a critique of the mediating, yet always contradictory logic of capitalist reproduction.

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fundamental premis that an anti-capitalist revolution must be a class revolution. For, if classes are constituted through the reproductive logic of capital, if it is capital that fuses the empirically existent wage workers into the antagonistic class logic of wage labor vs. capital, if this logic, together with market forces imposes a structure of interest onto the needs of the individuals (agents of production) who participate in it, *on what basis can one argue that the conscious self-constitution of these agents of production into a class opposed to capital can be anything more than the subjective affirmation of the logic of capital itself?* The point is, that class is not a freely chosen community but a structure imposed on individuals by the capitalist division of labor, fully compatable with the capitalist interest structure.

Heller seems to sense this contradiction, and almost names it when she cites the one place where Marx associated "interest" with "class" in a positive way. In *Wage Labour and Capital*, Marx states: "To say that the interests of capital and those of the workers are one and the same is only to say that capital and wage labour are two sides of one a and the same relationship..." and further on: "We see therefore, that even if we remain within the relationship of capital and wage labour, the interests of capital and the interests of wage labour are diametrically opposed" (cited in Heller, p. 65). Heller admits on the basis of these and other passages in *Capital* that Marx reduces the working class to its immediate relation with capital, but argues that here Marx is not talking about a working class that transcends capitalism, nor about radical needs. Nevertheless, the tension is there. The concept of class predominant in Marx's writings, especially in his late works, is precisely one in which the sociological strata, the workers, is "reduced" to or "identified" with the structural category of wage labor, a category of production. Clearly the correlate of this category must be interest, and not need. It is therefore no accident that Marx was able to associate only a few tenuous "radical needs" with the concept of class. He could deduce radical needs that break through the interest structure neither from the empirical existence of wage workers, nor from the side of the logical category of wage labor: both imply only the oppositional structure of interest between labor and capital that is the presupposition of capitalist production itself. Thus, the reason why Marx had to project radical needs onto the concept of class was not because the workers had not yet developed them (Heller), but because as members of the proletariat, *qua class*, they could develop only interests. To be sure, from this standpoint one could find the objective possibility for the proletariat to challenge capitalist relations. However, this is not the same thing as the objective possibility for the development of radical needs that both challenge the existing system of interest and production *and* point to an emancipated society. The two become the same only if we assume in a deterministic and evolutionist manner that a post-capitalist society is by definition an emancipated one. The 20th century should by now have destroyed this illusion.

Nevertheless, our argument must not be taken as justification of Lenin's position that the working classes can, on their own, only develop a trade union (interest oriented) conscousness. In this regard, Lenin is not different from the "reformist" theorists of the Second International, for both resolve the antinomy of Marx's class theory (radical need vs. class interest) in favor of the concept of interest. As opposed to this approach, we would argue that radical needs can and do emerge at the point of production, but that these needs are not of averaged class members, but of individuals who challenge their status as workers and oppose the reduction of their needs, personality, activity, and individuality to the imperatives of class relations. While this

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might appear to be a trivial distinction, it provides, in our view, the only orientation that precludes the subordination of individual need to an alleged (and opaque) "general" class interest—it avoids the fetishization of the concept of class and the party politics that go along with it. But what are the chances of radical needs becoming socially important if we cannot link them to the social existence of fundamental groups within capitalist society?

This brings us to the second point. As previously stated, Heller articulates Marx's anti-authoritarian conceptualization of the relation of theory to praxis in terms of the concept of radical need. But the question remains: *Which and what kind of theory can relate to the radical needs of groups in motion?* Heller does not directly confront this problem because she focuses on the philosophical dimensions of the theory of need and its inter-connection with a future directed and open-ended philosophy of history. Consequently, the only systematic theory to be found in Marx, the theory of capitalist development, is discussed by Heller primarily in terms of the problematic of the philosophy of history. In other words, her concern is to show that insofar as capitalism develops the forces of production, universalistic structures, and the expansion of needs, albeit in an alienated framework, it creates the objective possibility for a future society to realize the ultimate value of human abundance and thereby overcome the alienation fundamental to much of past history. Nevertheless, the relation between Marx's exceedingly complex systemic analysis of capitalist reproduction, between his *social theory* and *praxis,* remains opaque. It can't be clarified unless we articulate the chances of radical needs within the framework of a critical social theory which mediates between philosophy of praxis and praxis itself. In other words, the nature of the theory which presumes to be able to speak to radical needs and praxis, the mode of meaning of the critique in which it engages, must also be reflected upon and reconstructed.

Two paradigmatic interpretations of the relation between the theory in *Capital,* and the potential praxis of its addressees, are worth mentioning in this regard—those of the early Lukács (*History and Class Consciousness*) and Habermas. We believe that within the critical Marxist tradition only they attempt to articulate fully the relation of critical social theory to both philosophy and praxis in the context of a Marx interpretation. Up to a point, their analyses coincide. Both interpret the *theory* in *Capital* as an *ideology critique* which, through the reconstruction (for Lukács, totalization) of the system logic of capitalist reproduction as a *developmental crisis theory,* defetishizes the quasi-natural and ahistorical appearance of its law-like tendencies and establishes the principles around which these tendencies point to the possibility of their self-abolition. Both presume that the critique of political economy delegitimizes the fundamental ideology integrating capitalist society (the ideology of equivalence exchange) by unmasking the irreconcilable opposition of social classes whose struggles are integral to the developmental logic itself. Lukács assumed (and apparently Habermas agrees with him insofar as liberal capitalism is concerned)[18] that the critical, defetishizing theory of capitalist development could speak to the political praxis of its addressees in the context of objective crises, if they (the proletariat) followed the path of the critique through a parallel self-defetishization of reality. He located the possibility for this mediation first in the delegitimizing crisis potentials uncovered by the theory, and second, in the experience of the proletariat whose struggles around labor time implied the consciousness of its alienation (as the mere

18. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975), pp. 24-33.

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object of the labor process). For Lukács, then, the theory which could mediate between philosophy and praxis, and relate directly to the radical needs of its addressees, was the critique of political economy to be found in *Capital*.

Although Habermas phrases his Marx-interpretation somewhat differently, his analysis comes close to that of Lukács. According to Habermas, the narrow framework of the critique of political economy was adequate to the task of informing political praxis in the 19th century because the principle of organization of liberal capitalism—the wage labor-capital relation—imposed upon the economy (the market mechanism especially) the double burden of social and system integration, i.e., of legitimation and of smooth functioning. In other words, the market mechanism, and the idea of freedom and equality of persons integral to it, was within the ideological framework of laissez-faire capitalism, peculiarly susceptible to the critique because it claimed to accomplish (in the absence of political regulation) both the satisfaction of needs and the fulfillment of norms. Correspondingly, a critical theory able to demonstrate the arbitrary character of socio-economic relations within capitalism, and their crisis-ridden tendencies, could simultaneously defetishize frozen structure and speak to the needs of those in movement. Thus, Habermas maintains that for liberal capitalism, with the separation of state and civil society, the institutionalization of the class relation through the labor market (instead of through the political state), and the placement of the onus of need satisfaction on the impersonal mechanism of the market rather than on the political state, economic crises could be directly translatable into crises of legitimation and hence, class struggle. In this context, he, like Lukács, deems the identification of critical theory able to speak to radical needs, with the critique of political economy, to be quite adequate.

But we know from experience, and from Lukács' work, that the gap between the location, through a defetishizing crisis theory, of objective possibilities for rupture, and the subjective possibility of developing radical needs on the part of the addressees of this theory, was bridged only through the solution of the party. Lukács' capitulation to Leninism, however, implicitly admits not only that the concept of the proletariat as the self-constituting revolutionary subject was a myth, but also and more important for our problem, that the defetishizing critique in *Capital* remains limited to the level of theory. It was not able to both delegitimize and inform the self-constitution and struggles of its addressees. As a critical social *theory*, the analysis of capitalist development in *Capital* could not, without the mediation of a third party, come into interaction with the political *praxis* of the proletariat to whom it was, in principle, addressed.

By limiting the efficacy of the critique of political economy to the past (19th century liberal capitalism), by insisting that historical changes within capitalism necessitate a new and expanded critical theory no longer limited to economic relations. Habermas appears to avoid the dilemma of the relation between theory and praxis faced by Lukács. The crux of his argument is that the logic of crisis has changed in late capitalism, necessitating the development of a multi-levelled, and altered crisis theory (critique) that could both uncover the logic(s) of reproduction of the system(s) and ultimately speak to the needs of those pressing for its abolition. Above all, he insists that the critique of political economy is no longer able to fulfill its intended task of functioning simultaneously as a systems analysis of the economic processes of reproduction *and* as a critique of fetishism (and of the derivative cultural phenomena

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-33.

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of bourgeois society) which delegitimizes by translating the theory of crisis-ridden capitalist accumulation into "action-theoretical" assumptions of the theory of classes. Habermas argues that in late capitalism economic crises are no longer directly translatable into class struggles or crises of legitimacy for the system because 1) the state supplements and partially takes over the function of system integration from the market, 2) the ideology of equivalence exchange no longer functions adequately or solely as a mode of social integration and 3) because the partial repoliticization of relations of production by the state results in the social anonymization of the class structure. That is, the politicization from above of wage struggles (collective bargaining, state mediation) breaks down the identity of classes and class consciousness, pacifying class struggle by channeling it into struggles over benefits geared to the bureaucratic structures of the union and the state. He thus concluded that a non-economistic multi-leveled crisis theory of more or less integrated wholes (political, social, cultural, economic subsystems) is required to assess the chances of struggles for liberation and radical needs.

The explanatory power of Habermas' analysis of late capitalism is not at issue here. The relevant point for our discussion is that the uncoupling and separation between mechanisms of social and system integration—between legitimating ideologies and organizational functioning—implies that a *single critique* that locates possible dysfunction on one level (economic crisis theories) cannot function simultaneously as an ideology critique that can relate directly to praxis. However, we would argue against Habermas, that this is also the case regarding Marx's theory and context, for theoretical and not simply historical reasons. In other words, we challenge the assumption held by Lukács and Habermas that the critical theory in *Capital*, whatever the historical conditions, could suffice as an ideology critique able to both defetishize and articulate norms and values which could speak to the radical needs of those in motion. The problem lies then in the concept of ideology critique, or in the definition of critique tout court. Both Lukács and Habermas totalize Marx's theory as *critique*; the former identifying critique with defetishization, the latter imposing the concept of ideology critique (common to the Frankfurt school) as the confrontation of norm and reality, onto the critique of political economy in *Capital*. To be sure, both concepts of critique are to be found in Marx's works. But what neither Lukács nor Habermas see, is that the critique of political economy, from the standpoint of the latter concept of ideology critique, constitutes an impoverishment by Marx of his own work. Whereas Habermas makes the error of projecting an earlier notion of ideology critique (e.g., the confrontation of norm and reality in the critique of Hegel's theory of the state) onto the late texts of Marx, Lukács makes the opposite mistake of over-estimating the emancipatory potential of a critique limited to defetishization. But let us briefely explain in terms of Marx's own work.

By understanding ideology as a derivation of the system of circulation (liberty, equality as reflection of market relations), the "mature" Marx limited his immanent critique of political economy to its defetishization; that is, to the denaturalization of bourgeois economic and class relations. But the one-sided nature of this mode of critique, the exclusive focus on the identification of objective crisis possibilities and the corresponding *reduction* of "*bourgeois* norms" to their ideological and integrative function, deprived the critique of political economy of its relation to the consciousness and praxes of its addressees. For such a critique is incapable of uncovering norms and values that could inform the praxis of individuals struggling around radical needs.

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Once the universalistic norms of modern civil society are reduced to epiphenomenal expressions of bourgeois market and production relatons, the possibility for an immanent basis for an ideology critique that could positively inform praxis is lost. Heller's demonstration that this critique has normative *presuppositions* does not help in this regard, because the mature Marx's severence of these presuppositions from any connection with "bourgeois" values renders them both arbitrary in the context of the critique of political economy. In short, defetishization is not identical to an ideology critique that delegitimates reality by opposing the one-sided, partial institutionalization of its integrative norms to the truth content of the norms themselves. Marx's early critique of the modern state, however, was an ideology critique of this kind. It functioned as an immanent critique in the sense of Adorno, oriented to the articulation of the tension between the universalistic norms (freedom, justice, equality of personality, democracy, community, etc.) immanent in the claims to legitimacy of modern institutions and the inadequate realization of these norms on the basis of these institutions. This mode of critique simultaneously provided the *objectivity* for Marx's own chosen values—they are, as it were, already "in the world"—and the possibility of relating these values, through a process of discussion and enlightenment to the struggles of individuals who develop the radical needs for their *full* realization. Far from reducing norm to reality in the manner of the one-dimensional, albeit defetishizing, critique of political economy (based on the *false* assumption that the market provided its own legitimations), the immanent critique opposing norm to reality sought to preserve the utopian truth content of the universalistic values while delegitimizing the institutional framework that perverted them.

It is clear that Marx moved to the critique of political economy and developed another mode of immanent critique (that defetishizes through totalization of the system logic of capital) in order to ground the *objective possibility* for the abolition of capitalism and the realization of the value of human abundance—a task that the norm-reality critique could not perform because it lacked a developmental theory of capitalism. But it is also clear that this move led to an impoverishment of the concept of critique, creating an antinomy between the philosophy of praxis (based on value presuppositions) and the "scientific" theory of capitalist development (based on claimed value freedom). The concept of class and interest merely reproduced this antinomy. However, it is precisely in this context that Heller's book on needs offers the first step toward a theoretical resolution of this antinomy. By resuscitating Marx's argument that only theory which speaks to the radical needs of its addressees could be considered radically critical, by stressing the importance of the value-concept of need, Heler frees Marxism from the straight jacket of objectivistic theory and manipulative politics. To this we must add that both dimensions of Marx's critique of modern civil society are necessary to the task. On the one hand, a non-economistic, multidimensional crisis theory is essential in order to assess the chances for rupture and for the emergence of radical needs on a large scale in the apparently streamlined economic, political, and cultural structures of late capitalism. On the other hand, a philosophy of history with practical intent requires a critique that articulates and thereby *opens to discussion* the norms and values of the past and present which could affirm and inform struggles around radical needs. Only on this basis could one speak of a mediation between theory and praxis.

Jean Cohen

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Joel Kovel, *A Complete Guide to Therapy*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976. 284 plus xviii pages.

In the preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant remarks on the pletora of contradictory philosophical systems and comments caustically: "the battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics" (A viii). The claims and counterclaims have finally produced a "prevailing mood of weariness and indifferentism" which, "while not the solution, at least contains the germs of a solution," for, says Kant, "indifferentism is an indication that 'the age. . . refuses to be any longer put off with illusory knowledge' " (A xi). Accordingly Kant proposes to undertake a critique of theoretical reason whose purpose is to "(determine) the rules and limits of its [reason's] employment" (A xvi). The advantage of such a critique is that it not only establishes a sphere for theoretical reason, but also preserves the autonomy of practical reason (morality) by clearing up the confusion as to their separate functions. The outcome of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the realization that the strength of reason lies in its limitations; the enterprise of rationality itself thus requires critical reflection as to the limits of reason. Kant remarks that he has made "completeness (his) chief aim" and he asserts with delightful confidence that "there is not a single metaphysical problem which has not been solved or for the solution of which the key at least has not been given" (A xiii).

Joel Kovel is more modest. In spite of the audacious title of his book he explicitly disavows any claim to completeness.[1] The comparison with Kant is not gratuitous however, for Kovel subscribes wholeheartedly to the Kantian postulate that the function of critique is to establish and demarcate limits. Moreover the situation facing Kovel is analogous to that facing Kant; only the terrain and the location of the "battlefield" have changed. In 20th century America therapy has replaced metaphysics as the subject of "endless controversies." The terms of the debate are different; the "here and now" replaces the infinite, and the claims and counter claims revolve not about the immortality of the soul, but about the methods (and the time required) to attain self realization, self fulfillment, self knowledge, or the proper amount of existential *angst*. Eighteenth century metaphysics may have been laid to rest, but the necessity for critical reflection continues. Every age generates its own form of "illusory knowledge," and every form of illusory knowledge requires its own form of critique. Twentieth century America requires a critique of therapeutic reason, and it is this task which Kovel has courageously undertaken.

To be sure, therapy is not a matter of "pure reason," but of practice as well. Furthermore Kovel's "object" differs from Kant's in its form as well as in its content. Unlike 18th century metaphysics, therapy in late capitalism is a commodity bought and sold on the market which integrates and dispenses mass culture. Consequently the critic of therapeutic reason cannot rely on a deduction from *a priori* principles, but must descend into the market place and examine the wares. At most, Kovel can approximate Virgil and lead us through the labyrinths. One can only be grateful that he has undertaken this enormous task with humor and perspective, and a refreshing sense of his own limitations as a guide.

The Complete Guide to Therapy is divided into three parts. In the first section

1. I understand the title was not entirely of his choosing.

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Kovel discusses among other matters the nature of the neurotic process, the importance of transference in therapy, the distinction between "cure" and "help," and some axioms of therapy. The first part of the book contains some incisive comments regarding therapy as a sociological phenomenon which offers its participants a sense of identity and community. This section and the short last section are the more theoretical parts of the book. Part Two, "The Varieties of Therapeutic Experience," forms the bulk of the book. As one might expect, this section consists of a discussion of the various therapies on the market as it were. In addition, it contains Kovel's informal remarks on the political and social implications of the different therapeutic theories and practices, and a "practical synopsis," a "discussion" in question and answer format regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the various therapies. The practical synopsis tends towards a "dear Abby" tone; it cannot help but be superficial and hence inadequate, and its question and answer format is unduly restrictive. Nevertheless, a major achievement of this section is its demystification of the claims and aims of the several therapies. Kovel's humor and gentle irony effectively undermine even the more grandiose claims. He thus provides us with a sense of perspective which is all the more necessary given the self importance of many of the "founding fathers" of therapeutics.

Part two contains a wealth of information. Kovel excels in outlining and distinguishing the assumptions held by different therapeutic schools regarding human nature, society, and the aim of therapy itself. As a non-professional I found his discussion of such widely disparate methods as Jungian therapy and transactional analysis informative; even the by-now familiar topic of the differences between Freud and the neo-Freudians is well done. Particularly good is his exposition of the differences between Freud and Perls on the phenomenon of guilt, a difference not only in their theoretical perspective but in their therapeutic approach as well. Equally praiseworthy is the discussion and critique of the assumptions made by family therapy. Kovel indicates the reasons for its "success" (understood here as popularity) and points to its inevitable limitations. (Society is not one big happy or unhappy family). Finally, mention should be made of Kovel's excellent commentary on the dangers of "enthrallment" which inhere in Arthur Janov's "primal therapy." The discussion of enthrallment is a particularly good example of Kovel's thematic insistence that no matter what the explicit claims of a therapy, it inevitably makes certain assumptions about social reality, and it inevitably has a social and political content-whether or not this content is explicitly acknowledged. Social reality appears in the authority structure of "primal therapy" in the person of the therapist who "forbids" the patient to express feelings of transference; social reality is no less present, although perhaps more camouflaged, in the mandated intimacy of the encounter group.

The most valuable aspect of Kovel's discussion of the varieties of therapeutic experience is his willingness to raise the hard, or at least awkward, questions that go beyond the perimeter of what the therapies themselves assume. The critic of therapeutic reason must ask these questions, must ask for example, to what extent changes in consciousness which allegedly occur in a therapeutic setting are due to particular therapeutic techniques or to the setting in which the techniques are practiced. Unless the setting is taken into account, it becomes an unrecognized part of the techniques themselves. This is the more critical the more "dramatic" or "instant" are the alleged transformations. In the case of the *est* experience for example, approximately 250 people spend the better part of two consecutive weekends packed

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into one large room.[2] Their sense of objective time is eliminated (destroyed) by a prohibition against wearing watches, and their normal physical activities (eating, drinking, going to the bathroom, moving about) are subject to rigid control. In such conditions it is not surprising that all sorts of changes in consciousness take place. Nor is it surprising that the participants report a sense of "unity" with the "group." Commenting on *est* as a therapeutic experience Kovel writes: "The very size of the group along with the technique of *est*, tends to keep those others in a rather undifferentiated state, hence promoting a sense of union with them. The result for the individual is a state of openness, receptivity and weakened discrimination. Into the gap steps the *est* philosophy, embodied in the trainer and, behind him, Werner Erhard" (172).

In view of these remarks I found Kovel's easy tolerance of *est* both puzzling and disturbing. The only *caveat* Kovel issues is against supposing that *est* is the "proper approach for severe emotional disturbance" or that it could be "a substitute for sustainedly working through one's conflicts" (*ibid.*). Otherwise, he says, "*est* would seem to be a positive addition to the range of therapies" (*ibid.*). On the contrary, I would suppose that the sort of totalitarian experience undergone by *est* participants is itself harmful regardless of what "positive changes" people afterwards report. I will comment later more at length on the problem which Kovel's casual remark betrays, the problem of an easy or a false tolerance for a variety of therapeutic strategies.

Here I want to raise another general objection to Kovel's book, an objection which is actually expressed as a disappointment regarding Kovel's almost exclusive use of the male adjective and pronouns to stand for the hypothetical or generalized patient, therapist, person or individual. The few times when Kovel does include the female terms as well are so rare that they constitute startling exceptions; the usage is so infrequent that its occurence tends to distract the reader by calling attention to itself as a stylistic event. The male bias that runs through the book is doubly disappointing because Kovel identifies himself in the Introduction as a person of a "rather radical political sensibility" (xiv). I had hoped that sensibility would have led Kovel to be sensitive to the importance of language in camouflaging the existence of those of us who "hold up half the sky." The insistence on the inclusion of the female terms is no mere quibble. Work done by feminist linguists has explored the relationship between sex role and language use. A recent article in the *MLA Newsletter* notes that "the world interpreted through a generic *he* is a place where men set the norms;" the article continues, "...in a male-defined universe of discourse, women disappear...or assume pseudomale protective coloration, or find themselves forcibly defined as the other, the inauthentic."[3]

In Kovel's case (as perhaps always), style is related to content; the male bias is not only a matter of style but informs the substantive remarks. This is perhaps most evident in any discussion that has to do with sexuality: Discussing the pros and cons of

2. *est* is an acronym for Erhard Seminars Training, an amalgam of experiences and exercises put together (packaged) by a former sales executive named Jack Rosenberg. Rosenberg changed his name to Werner Erhard and proceeded to sell *est*. "est" is also the Latin for "it is." The significance of "what is" as against "what was" or "what could be" is a proud "discovery" of Rosenberg-Erhard. For an excellent critique of such discoveries, see Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* (Boston, 1975) pp. 56ff. See also my review of *Social Amnesia* in *Telos* No. 25 (Fall, 1975) pp. 196-210.

3. *Modern Langugae Association Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May, 1977), p. 4.

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sex therapy Kovel writes: "Without actual and gratifying copulation, sexuality burns itself out in hopeless frustration" (204).[4] The male (phallocentric) bias concerning sexuality could not be more clearly stated. It is all the more unfortunate that this remark occurs at the end of a discussion of the role of the imagination in sexuality, for its suggests that the imagination in question is unabashedly and exclusively male. The phallocentric conception of sexuality also structures Kovel's account of the origin of neurosis in childhood fantasy. The "little girl" become a "little woman" whose sexual fantasies are interpreted from the point of view of the male sexual imagination, as the desire for copulation with her father. Having assumed this to be the case, Kovel can then ask sympathetically, "can the little girl escape the fear that her genitals will be torn apart by the father she wants...?" (20).

As I said, Kovel's sexism is a disappointment; it should not preclude a consideration of the thematic issues raised in the first and third parts of the book. It is to these which I now turn.

Kovel subscribes to a dialectical perspective which recognizes that "the person exists in fact as the center point of an enormous web of human relations...(which) extend in several dimensions at once" (49). For dialectical reason there is no rigid dichotomy between the subjective and objective dimensions of reality; the opposition between them exists as a continuous tension rather than as an absolute dividing line. Or as Hegel has taught us, it is only the non-dialectical understanding which clings to hard and fast distinctions between parts of a whole. Nevertheless, and within the perspective of a dialectical totality, Kovel insists on the distinction between what he calls subjective and objective sources of distress. It is for this purpose that he relcaims and appropriates Freud's distinction between hysterical misery and ordinary unhappiness, a distinction which for Kovel is roughly equivalent to the difference between "neurotic misery" and "social alienation." Kovel's point is that while these are connected, they are not identical. "Therefore they should not be collapsed into each other. A person can be both socially alienated *and* neurotic" (33).

The distinction can be clarified as follows: the neurotic inability to make choices is something over and above (or perhaps beneath) the objective limitations of choice which are a structural feature of capitalism itself. Similarly, capitalist reality contains mystification and deception as inherent elements of the process of production and reproduction which become an added layer of pain for the individual when they are filtered through the screen of neurotic misery.[5] The distinction between neurotic

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4. Kovel cites no evidence for this claim, nor could he. There is a wealth of "feminist" critique of this position, but one does not need to rely on the "feminists;" one need only refer to the work of Masters and Johnson or ask any woman.

5. Kovel is not centrally concerned in this book with the more extreme forms of mental-emotional suffering which constitute "madness" or "psychosis." His discussion of "hysterical misery" refers essentially and primarily to what he calls "neurotic misery." The distinction between neurosis and psychosis as Kovel draws it has to do with the individual's perception of a sense of self. "Neurotic or realistic forms of anxiety have to do with some impending threat to an existing self...In madness, however, the 'I' falls apart, shattered, and with it go all the defenses against many summed neurotic dangers" (38). As this quote indicates, Kovel is no partisan of that false romanticization of misery according to which only those in the extremes of emotional anguish perceive the real truth (the schizophrenic as the seer of our time). See his comments on pp. 37-39. For a slightly different perspective as regards neurotic rather than psychotic misery see the following: "...when we are neurotic, as wretched as we look, we are really much closer to the despised pleasure than when we are more happily engaging in normal 'well-balanced' pursuits" (44). For an excellent critique of the romanticization of madness

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misery and social misery is difficult to make in any case, and the difficulty is compounded by the fact that advanced capitalism is a social order which is objectively irrational; it produces not only social alienation but also hysterical misery as part of its own "normal" functioning. It is to Kovel's credit that he does not minimize the difficulties.

The purpose of the distinction between subjective and objective sources of misery is to determine when (if at all) therapy (of whatever sort) is needed. Or as Kovel puts it, the issue which this distinction seeks to address is contained in the question: to what extent is the feeling that "one's life is not going as well as it could be" due to "an emotional disturbance that can be approached therapeutically'?? (12). To put the question in these terms is to raise two further questions, the first of which concerns the nature of "neurotic functioning" and the existence of "neurotic qualities" (12), the second of which concerns the issue of "treatment."

A major virtue of Kovel's account of neurosis and neurotic functioning is his incremental approach. The discussion proceeds by adding bits of information and by restating the main claims in various ways, thus approaching the topic from many angles. The reader gets the point that there are various and overlapping descriptions of neurosis—which illustrates Kovel's claim that "the contours of disorder" are multiple, and the "the number of ways people can go awry is countless" (1). Thus we find that neurosis can be described as "a loss of the ability to make choices" (12) or as a diminution of the range of an individual's "inner freedom" (*ibid.*). We can say that its "hallmark...is compulsion" (13), that "a person in the grip of neurotic experience is embroiled in an emotional conflict which he (*sic*) seems set against understanding..." (13). Or again, we can conceptualize neurosis as "self estrangement felt as a state of embalance." (49). Infact the varieties of neurotic experience are so fluid that "the only features common to all manifestations of the neurotic process are, one, a loss of inner freedom, and two, domination by hateful and frightening elements of experience" (39).

It is not accidental that Kovel speaks about the "manifestations of the neurotic process;" indeed it would be misleading to suppose that Kovel himself does not hold a particular view of what neurotic functioning is or what neurotic qualities or elements are. All the overlapping descriptions are tied to one explanatory theory: "Neurosis is nothing less than an exhorbitant price we pay for achieving some degree of control over our own destructiveness" (14). The destructiveness is something of which the neurotic is unaware, and in fact Kovel claims neurosis becomes comprehensible only if we assume what he calls (somewhat romantically) "the demonic" aspects of human nature, or moe prosaically, the unconscious (78). With the assumption of an unconscious state the neurosis becomes intelligible, method in madness; without it, neurosis is simply unreasonableness or bad habits" (16). And again "if we are to make sense out of the event,...we have to postulate a further subjective state which is *unconscious*"(15). The "event" referred to (Kovel calls it a "neurotic event") is a case of premature ejaculation which he explains in terms of "unconscious fantasy structure" (*ibid.*). The references to the unconscious should indicate how crucial Freud's model of neurosis is to Kovel's conception.

Kovel follows Freud in locating the origin of neurosis in the "unfinished madness of childhood..." (19). "It is essential that we recognize the great susceptibility of the child-mind to neurotic influence" (20-21). This susceptibility seems to inhere in the human imagination, in human nature *simpliciter*, in the human situation itself.

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"Nothing can be human unless it is paradoxical" (24). This casual remark is significant; neurosis has its origin in the fact that our infantile wishes "are bound to founder on their own contradictions" (20). And these contradictions stem from the dual fact of extreme helplessness and "limitless desire" understood in an erotic sense (*ibid.*). Kovel's examples build on a theory of infantile sexuality in a specific Freudian sense. ". . .[D]espite the fact that his power is so inconsequential that he can engage in murderous or incentuous thoughts without worrying about the actual effects of his wishes, the child [*sic*] freely confuses intentions with actual deeds" (*ibid.*). The contradictory nature of infantile wishes is a fact about human biology so to speak, independent of any and every social configuration. In situations of "normal, favorable development" the "demons lack sufficient impetus to break down the barrier" of what consciousness learns is permissible (21). The point for Kovel is that the "demons" are a permanent possibility of the metaphysics of the human psyche.

The reference to metaphysics here is intentional; Kovel's claim that things can go wrong in an infinite number of ways is about the *manifestations* of the neurotic process, and about the different ways in which this process is apparent *experientially*, from the point of view of the sufferer. The plurality of manifestations is deceptive; the theoretician of the psyche knows that in reality there is "one feature which most distinguishes those particles of experience that form the nucleus of a neurotic structure. . . the person *experiences an overwhelming hatred while in the state of desire toward one who is also loved*" (25, italics in original). The origin of neurosis (in contrast to its manifestations) is both specific and unique, and if we look hard enough we will find it: "Look *closely enough* into the heart of *any* neurotic formation—whether it be a depression, some specific sexual dysfunction, a phobia, an obsessional thought, a hysterical attack, an addiction, even a paranoid delusion—and there, suffused through the particular structure, will be found lurking this same hatred directed in some transformed way toward new objects of the old desires" (25, italics added). One cannot help but be suspicious of urgings to look closely enough until we see what the speaker already knows is there. Kovel's claim sounds uncannily like Hume's exhortation to examine our "ideas' in order to find that they are all (ultimately) derived from our sense impressions.[6] In another context Kovel himself admits the self fulfilling ambiguities in this sort of enterprise. Speaking of the difficulties in deciding whether or not to seek therapy Kovel notes that the very definition of one's "problem" as treatable in a psycho-therapeutic sense is not itself free from consequences. "Once it (the problem) becomes identified its further development —which may include a particular form of therapy—is shaped by how we conceive it" (35).

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see Terry Kuper's "Schizophrenia and Reification," *Socialist Revolution* 29 (July-Sept. 1976), pp. 105-124.

6. The reader may have some difficulty with the fact that Kovel both expounds and argues a particular theory of neurotic functioning and emotional disturbance, and attempts to give a general overview of the whole range of therapeutics. Compare the claims Kovel makes about neurosis with the following: "Therapies have an ideology, a certain view of the human world, a theory of neurosis and health, a set of practices. . .etc." (43) and "When all is said and done, therapy of every sort comes down to people influencing other people in a controlled way, and adding new, learned behavior to their responses. A set of assumptions is always formed about the 'real' nature of the emotional problem; and a set of procedures is carried out accordingly" (199). When Kovel is not making meta-claims about therapy as an institution his comments about "the neurotic problem" (59) are made from his very particular perspective.

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The distinction between the origin of a neurotic structure and its manifold manifestations is behind a distinction which informs Kovel's book which is central to his own philosophy of therapy, the distinction between help and cure. There is a strict correlation between Kovel's account of the pluralities of neurotic manifestations and his view that there are many ways of helping to "alleviate a neurotic situation" (16) but no way to *cure* neurosis. The argument behind this claim depends upon the metaphor of balance; neurosis is seen as imbalance. "Neurotic functioning consists of a set of imbalances...such that unconscious spheres take destructive control" (40). "A neurosis is set going by a serious imbalance between biological need, psychological state and social influence..." (17). "Neurotic functioning consists of a set of imbalances—imbalances between the forces within a person and imbalance between the person and his [*sic*] world" (44). There are "an innumerable number of disequilibrations between the forces of impulse, psychological givens, and of social influence" (40). Or again, "it is as though each and every neurosis consists...of a state of *imbalance* between objective and subjective..." (16 italics in original.)

If the concept of imbalance is the central metaphorical description of neurosis, the concept of balance captures what therapy can hope to achieve. "If any (of a set of) manoeuvres tips the neurotic balance in such a way that a person is better able to deal with the intrusion of unconscous destructivity into his [*sic*] life, it may be called therapeutic" (42). Or in more colloquial terms, "the point is, if the balance can be upset in so many ways, so can it be righted in many ways" (40). The righting of the balance is not to be understood as cure, however, for "cure is literally not in question" (44). The righting of the balance is only to be seen as "help" in a palliative sense;" ...a number of different kinds of therapeutic intervention can be employed to alleviate a neurotic situation" (16).

Kovel is uneasy with the notion of mental or emotional health except "as the absence of neurotic functioning" (12). He seems less uneasy with the notion of mental or emotional ill health; (his committment to the medical model reveals itself in his persistent use of the term "patient" to refer to people in therapy). But the substitution of "imbalance" for "ill health" nevertheless raises the question as to what would be meant by "balance," and this question is left waiting in the wings. I suspect that Kovel has substituted the concepts of imbalance and balance for the concepts ill-health and health because he does not want to identify the restoration of balance with "cure" and this for several reasons.

The first reason has to do with the nature of late capitalism as a society: "cure is literally not in question...(because)...we cannot conceive of the health of the individual apart from that of the social whole in which he is imbedded..." (44). This statement recalls Adorno's sarcastic description of what psychotherapy accomplishes in an irrational society: "In adjusting to the mad whole, the patient becomes really sick."

In the "Introduction" to his book, Kovel has alerted his readers to the view that "given the nature of the psyche and present social relations, a certain amount of neurosis is inevitable, and any therapy which tries to short circuit this truth is baying at the moon" (xiv). Kovel wants to guard against extravagant (and illusory) claims of what therapy can achieve. He casts a (correctly) suspicious eye on what he calls "positive therapy" (97), any therapy that promises joy or fulfillment, or any therapy

7. Quoted by Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia*, p. 121.

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"designed to add something along with relieving neurotic distress" (*ibid.*). By the same token, Kovel decries the instant cures and therapeutic "breakthroughs" whose miraculous powers are proclaimed with ever increasing fervor, miracles that succeed each other on the market with ever increasing speed. "We have enough inflation without adding the promise of salvation through therapy" (xiv). Those therapies that promise salvation perpetrate a dual deception: salvation is not to be had (at any price), and the search for salvation through therapy distracts attention away from the urgent task of "overhauling...society" (*ibid.*). The goal of salvation through therapy is deceptive not only in content but in form: it tends to conflate individual remedies with social solutions and thus it perpetuates the social totality that produces and reproduces both the common and uncommon varieties of unhappiness.

Kovel wisely refrains from apportioning the percentage of neurosis due to social relations and the percentage due to "the nature of the psyche." And nevertheless one is tempted to ask him whether he thinks that in a non-oppressive society neurosis could be cured, not just relieved or alleviated. The question is important because one wants to know if Kovel thinks the concept of cure is inherently incompatible with neurosis; is it somehow *conceptually mistaken* to speak of "curing neurosis?" Or is this notion merely a *historical impossibility*; is it impossible in this (or any other oppressive) society?

At first glance the distinction between cure and help as regards neurotic misery depends on an asymmetry between physical and emotional troubles. Kovel thinks it is perfectly legitimate to speak of curing the former. With regard to physical troubles, we have a yardstick, "a real standard of health that can be appealed to the way a doctor can measure the progress of a healing fracture by comparing it to the natural form of the bone" (44). Apparently when it comes to physical troubles the *caveat* as to the impossibility of conceiving of the health of the individual apart from that of the social whole does not apply. Why should this be so?

Kovel treats the difference between physical and emotional (mental) well-being as belonging to two different subjects, the body and the self. The reason that we can speak (non-ideologically) of curing physical disease or injury is that "the body lives within nature, which has its own harmonies; but the self lives between nature and history, two spheres that, as you know, often don't get on too well with each other" (44). But this is too neat an abstraction and the dichotomy itself is unsound, for our bodies too live between nature and history. There is another confusion here, a confusion between the minimal and the "utopian" or "maximal" sense of health and well-being. For although we can distinguish between a broken bone and a sound one, or between a cancerous lung tissue and a non-cancerous one, we do not have (nor could we have) an experiential standard of what it would be like for us as biological creatures to live in a non-oppressive (non-polluted) social and natural environment. Indeed in such an environment both "our bodies and our selves" would have a vastly different experience. This is the point Marx makes when he characterizes a liberated communism as an environment in which nature become a bond between human beings, an environment which permits the "emancipation of all the human senses and characteristics (*Eigenschaften*)."[8] This is not to say that (in the meantime) we should no longer talk of curing individuals of cancer or of healing their broken bones; it is

8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, (New York, 1975), Vol. 3, p. 300.

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only that we should not apply qualitatively different criteria to our physical and emotional existence. We should not conflate criteria which can only refer to the natural and social possibilities available in late capitalism (or other oppressive societies), with criteria whose reference is to an emancipated social and natural order in a possible future.

The contrast between physical cure and emotional help camouflages another distinction; the difference between cure and help is actually the difference between objective betterment and subjective opinion. There is an objective connotation to the notion of cure which Kovel wants to reserve for bettering either physical or social troubles. For physical troubles one wants doctors and medicines (not therapists) and for social troubles (social alienation) one wants a social cure, the "overhauling of society" (xiv). And this is something no therapy can claim to do.

It is to Kovel's credit that he wants to guard against the conflation of what therapy can do for the individual with what needs to be done for the social whole, and it is also to his credit that he rejects a therapeutic *apriorism* which insists that one therapy should "work" for everyone. Nevertheless there is a persistent tendency in his dicsussion to abandon the concept of "help" to the vagaries of individual subjective opinion to be judged by whatever "values" th individual happens to have. Speaking of therapy as the restoration of balance in an individual's life Kovel writes: "It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the changes can never be measured by some absolute standard, but only through the way a person evaluates his [*sic*] life. In other words, the "better way' is the way one likes" (42). It is not clear here whether Kovel is making a sociological claim about the fact that people do report that they got "help" from all sorts of "therapeutic" experiences, techniques, and methods, or whether he himself is endorsing individual subjectivity as the criterion and judge of effective therapy. At the beginning of his discussion of the varieties of therapeutic experience Kovel makes a random list of "maneuvers" that "may be called therapeutic." The list contains some which he properly describes as "loathsome" (*ibid.*); (any reader can supply others which would be equally loathsome), but for Kovel the point is that whether or not a particular activity, strategy, maneuver, technique or practice has a therapeutic effect is itself a morally neutral fact. "[Whatever] tips the neurotic balance in such a way that a person is better able to deal with the intrusion of unconscious destructivity into his [*sic*] life. . . may be called therapeutic" (*ibid.*). Again we have to ask Kovel, is he describing "ordinary usage" among practicing therapists, or is he in fact making a claim that any such maneuver had a *right* to be called therapeutic? It seems that in spite of his "rather radical political sensibility" Kovel could find himself in the position of claiming that, for SS guards, torturing people "may be called therapeutic." Certainly such a "maneuver" would qualify as "loathsome," but why should we call it "therapeutic?"

Of course I do not for a moment suppose that Kovel himself would advocate the use of torture as a therapeutic strategy—no matter how well it "worked." My point here is a theoretical one. The tendency towards a false tolerance in Kovel's evaluation of therapeutic strategies is due to something which has nothing to do with the issues of therapy *per se*. The root problem is what I would call Kovel's "subjective radicalism," his penchant for assuming that one's politics are a matter of one's "values," a choice for which no justification could be given, thus an absurd choice in the best existentialist sense. Consider the following claim about therapeutic strategies: ". . . [there are] some strategies that are loathsome, some that are noble, some that

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seem good, clean common sense, and some that seem conformist nonsense—and *all of these in different ways to different people*" (42, italics added). One might well conclude from this comment that Kovel subscribes to an ethical-political relativism where "X is loathsome" means "X is loathsome to me." To be sure, Kovel asserts that therapies have to be "assessed" by moral and social standards (40), but this claim is weakened when it appears in the context of the above statements and in conjunction with the claim cited earlier: "the best way is the way one likes" (42).

It is unfortunate that Kovel's often incisive comments as to the political implications of various therapies deliberately abstract from the question of their "purely" therapeutic value, for this means that he is left with a dichotomy between therapeutic effectiveness and political significance (truth). In effect, and in spite of his political evaluation of therapeutic strategies, Kovel's perspective results in an abandonment of the therapeutic dimension of the realm of a (non-political) practice. "Whether (various strategies) 'work' or not depends less on any intrinsic value, or even on how well thought out they are, than on whether they fit or not with a given neurotic situation" (*ibid.*).[9] That Kovel then applies moral or social judgments to this "fit" does not smooth over the dichotomy between an instrumentalist therapeutic reason and social truth. The question to raise at this point is whether the dichotomy itself is an inevitable one or whether it is the result of a faulty perspective and some problematic assumptions. Whether a certain mechanical device works or not is indeed a matter of whether it fits or not with a given mechanical situation, but unhappiness (whether of the hysterical or the more ordinary sort) is not a given mechanical situation. And we should be wary of any metaphors which invite us to suppose that one can separate the "effectiveness" of a therapy from its (political) truth. To treat this issue as two questions is to legitimize an instrumentalist conception of therapeutic reason which is then impervious to external (subjective) political evaluations. It is one thing to argue for the limits of therapy; it is quite another to interpret the limits of therapy in an instrumentalist sense.

Kovel's discussion of therapeutic effectiveness is reminiscent of statements made by Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown in dissociating psychotherapeutics from psychoanalysis as social theory. Criticizing the revisions in Freudian theory made by the neo-Freudians, Marcuse writes: "The right to such reorientations in the interest of successful therapy is not questioned here."[10] And in a similar vein N.O. Brown says: "I am not criticizing psychoanalytic therapy as a technique for restoring broken-down individuals to a useful role in society. Such a technique can only be judged pragmatically. Anything goes if it works..."[11]

Both Marcuse and Brown make these remarks in the spirit of preserving what they consider the critical thrust of psychoanalysis as social theory. For Marcuse especially,

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9. Kovel sometimes puts the word, therapeutic, in single quotes (as he does here with the word, work,). This usage, which is rare, seems to suggest that he is intending to distinguish between what is called therapeutic, and what really *is* therapeutic. If this is his intention, it is not carried out; in fact it is entirely subverted because the distinction between the two possible senses of therapeutic is blurred by Kovel's instrumentalist or operational perspective. In addition to the remarks already cited see the following: "...it will be clear why almost any model of therapy will work for somebody, and why no model will work for everybody" (39). And "Thus some therapeutic means may resemble putting out a forest fire and preventing future fires, by paving the forest" (42). See my discussion below of still other comments of pp. 226 and 244.

10. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1966), p. 226.

11. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (New York, 1959), p. 155.

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the critical element in Freud's thought reveals itself in his conception of therapy as a means of "transforming hysterical misery into ordinary unhappiness," the unhappiness experienced by all decently civilized adults in a society that wreaks havoc on the individual's claims for happiness. The limited goals of therapy reveal the inherently critical nature of psychoanalysis as social theory, for a limited therapy is the best witness to the ravages of a social order in which unhappiness is the universal fate and norm.

Kovel restates the necessity for the limits of therapy in the following terms: "If therapy is to arrest neurosis and not advance it, the role it must assume is a modest, defensive one without pretense or any kind of totalistic claim. In sum, therapy has no business imposing upon people either political categories they are unprepared to accept or spurious values of instant transcendence they are only too willing to swallow" (256). I cannot imagine taking issue with this statement. As a formal definition of the necessary limits of therapy it is elegant and entirely unobjectionable. The difficulties come when one juxtaposes this statement with some of Kovel's comments about therapeutic efficacy. It is then that the disjunction between therapeutic effectiveness and political significance reveals its dangerous potential, for it permits the very phenomenon Kovel explicitly criticizes, the imposition of political categories upon people. This comes out most clearly in remarks like the following: "...the therapist who summons the spectre of penis envy as a biological given is...not necessarily being untherapeutic" (244). Speaking as a political theorist Kovel says that the therapist who behaves in this fashion is "only [*sic*] being mystical in his biological way" (*ibid.*); speaking as a therapist Kovel informs us that "mystery backed up by authority can put to rest neurotic fears..." (*ibid.*). I find it significant that Kovel uses the terms "mystical" and "mystery" to characterize the concept of penis envy as a biological given; he shies away from the more critical and less romantic term "mystification." The earlier disparity between physical cure and emotional help reappears as the discrepancy between objective betterment and subjective palliative. Kovel instructs us that "many anxieties can be stilled by fostering an acceptance of the established order of things" (*ibid.*). Is the stilling of anxiety *eo ipso* and by definition therapeutic? One cannot help but wonder if Kovel would recommend mystification in cases of pneumonia...Again, we are encouraged to believe that "the therapist...who subtly or not-so-subtly suggests to his female patient that she would feel better if she accepted her submissive role, is at least in the short run, (query: how long is the 'short run?') not necessarily being untherapeutic, though he *is* being reactionary" (*ibid.*). I cannot help but wonder if Kovel would as easily suggest that reactionary mystification might be therapeutic for male clients. And would he be willing to say that therapists who suggest to their non-white clients that they would feel better if they accepted the "mystery" of their "inferiority" as true, are also "not necessarily being untherapeutic?"

These examples encourage us to suppose that the dichotomy between what may be therapeutic and what is socially progressive is an unfortunate (and unalterable) fact, the necessary results of the inevitable limits of therapy. The implication is that any attempt to avoid this dichotomy and define the "therapeutic" in a non-instrumentalist way is bound either to be ideological or to impose "political categories" upon people. It should be clear from these examples themselves that the imposition of political values does not (necessarily) occur via explicit, intentional political indoctrination; it occurs much more subtly and dangerously through the assumption that therapeutic efficacy is independent of social truth. In philosophical terms, we might say that

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Kovel's discussion suffers from the old fact-value dichotomy in new form. Whether a therapeutic technique "fits with a given neurotic situation" is a matter of fact; whether its political content is progressive or not is a matter of value. This may put the issue a little too baldly, but it brings home the dangers in Kovel's disjunction between what is "not necessarily...untherapeutic" and what is "reactionary." In the last analysis Kovel's "rather radical political sensibility" remains his own private affair—which is too bad.[12]

There are some remarks which suggest a possible counter direction; Kovel's critique of behavior modification comes close to questioning the therapeutic value of this approach because of its political content. "the real complication with behavior therapy...is not that it is the wrong therapy but that, unless scrupulously controlled and limited, it is wrong, period" (216). Behavior therapy "builds its edifice on the ruins of subjectivity," and Kovel maintains that it is this dimension (fantasy, imagination) which in the last analysis contains "the capacity to resist oppression" (217). Behavior therapy is "wrong, period" because it "fetishizes the process of reinforcement itself. And by making behavior into an idol, it turns the human subject into an object of manipulation, while correspondingly inflating the behavioral standards of the given social order" (216).

Kovel insists on the disjunction between therapeutic efficacy and social truth. Noting that the results of transactional analysis therapy may be "conformist, simplistic and mechanistic," Kovel remarks that this "is unfortunate, but doesn't rule out the possibility of their being therapeutic as well—it only calls into question the values inherent in therapy" (179). And in a summary comment in the last chapter of the book, Kovel says, "it is not that therapies as such are *ineffective*. They all have their limits—practical, theoretical, moral and otherwise—but within these limits *they are all designed to work*, if they are properly applied" (226, italics added). There could not be a more concise statement of an instrumentalist conception of therapeutic reason.

I come now to the final topic, the relation between therapeutics and "social alienation." Kovel addresses this point in a more or less informal manner at several

12. The differences between therapies thus remain external to their therapeutic efficacy: "They (therapies) all...have their place, and each may have an area of special application in respect to which they have worth equivalent to all the others. But beyond this rather obvious level of equality they have major differences: in intellectual substructure, in susceptibility to corruption or trivialization and, most importantly, in their different implications for the organization of the human community. Here is where the question of values takes on its most serious form" (60). To point out the "obvious level of equality" and to insist on the "serious form" of the question of values may disguise the dichotomy between therapeutic efficacy and social truth, but it does not transcend it.

13. This is the only time Kovel takes a position that therapy *per se* has a conformist content, that its values are "inherently" conservative. (At least I take this to be the meaning of a statement which remarks on the "values inherent in therapy" after describing the results as "conformist"). Much more typical is the view expressed on the next page, that therapy is an instrument of liberation which can also be used for domination (180). This accords with other claims: "the model for therapy is not the cure of a disease but the growth—more specifically—the education of a person" (4). And, "a good therapy should...be seen as a...grappling with a hitherto unseen antagonist—who is part of one's own self" (*ibid.*). And, "Without straining the comparison, we can say that therapy, like education, can be of use to everyone who needs it" (*ibid.*). On this view the limits of therapy are like the limits of education: "each, applied correctly, has a certain legitimate potential for help—and each has limits beyond which its usefulness becomes more problematic" (47).

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places; in addition, he devotes his last chapter to a more systematic discussion of what has previously been stated. Kovel approaches the topic by outlining "four main ideologies concerning the politics of therapy" (248).[14] The first three are already familiar to us. First, the Freudian perspective explicitly limits the role of therapy to that of "transforming hysterical misery into ordinary unhappiness." Its goals tend to be self-knowledge and self-discovery rather than the acquiring of particular psychological states (joy, excitement, etc.) and it is characterized by a methodology that "brackets" the individual's external social environment in order to focus on the realm of fantasy and imagination and to explore what Kovel earlier described as "the incursions made by the unconscious" (48). The Freudian perspective is approvingly described by Kovel as one in which "the demonic is amply recognized" (78).

Secondly, there is a therapeutic philosophy which concentrates on the immediate circumstances of an individual's existence and which Kovel prefers to call "counseling" rather than therapy proper. "A good counselor is one who provides emotional support, intellectual clarification and some attention to concrete environmental problems" (48). In a brief earlier discussion of "counseling" Kovel has indicated that the sorts of help that counseling provides can always be beneficial, although it cannot achieve the "deeper knowledge" nor the "gains of really trying to come to grips with the full (neurotic) problem" (*ibid.*). Thirdly, there is the perspective which sees therapy itself as the remedy (cure) for ordinary unhappiness instead of for hysterical misery. This perspective embraces what Kovel has termed "positive therapy," and it includes all those therapies which promise goals of which Kovel is so rightly suspicious: joy, intimacy, self-fulfillment in the here and now. Finally, there is radical therapy which Kovel characterizes as an approach which explains behavior in "directly political terms" and which focuses on "visible oppression" (249). In addition, Kovel claims that radical therapy seeks to delegitimize therapy itself as an institution (*ibid.*).

I found Kovel's discussion of radical therapy quite incomplete—disappointingly so. While he is correct that there is a radical critique of therapy which seeks to delegitimize it as an institution, he does not elucidate the context of this attempt. The advocates of this position maintain that therapy *per se* cannot be a *radical profession* inasmuch as no profession in late capitalist society can be "radical."[15] The slogan raised by this group, "therapists put yourselves out of business" is not meant to deny the reality of emotional suffering nor the need to get "help" with one's emotional problems. The slogan itself is directed at radicals who are thinking of becoming professional therapists and thereby somehow safe-guarding the institutionalization of their radicalism.

Kovel's very brief discussion of radical therapy does not mention the work done by Joy Marcus, Claude Steiner and others in "radical psychiatry."[16] He seems not to have

14. Kovel apparently does not use the term ideology in the pejorative sense whereby it is more or less equivalent to distorted thinking. Thus he sets himself the task of determining "an adequate ideological position for therapy" in 20th century America (251). I do not understand his remark, "All therapy is ideological and no therapy is ideological" (250).

15. This point of view is represented by Michael Glenn and Richard Kunnes. See their book, *Repression or Revolution? Therapy in the United States Today.* (New York, 1973).

16. I do not intend to suggest that any currently existing variety of radical therapy is free of difficulties—either conceptually, or as a therapeutic practice. For example, I find it unfortunate that "radical psychiatry" seem to rely on a conceptual model (and language) borrowed from transactional analysis. The problematic of a radical therapy requires a thoroughgoing discussion, however, not a curt dismissal. One of the issues which should be considered in such a discussion is the nature of the theoretical model which grounds therapeutic practice. Clearly what is needed is

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considered the discussions of therapeutic theory and practice in the journal, *Issues in Radical Therapy*. If he had, he might have noticed that "radical psychiatry" does not focus exclusively on "visible oppression" but devotes considerable attention to defining and attempting to combat "internalized oppression" or "collusion." Kovel seems to suppose that radical therapists as a group are guilty of a simplistic attempt to replace therapy with politics. A statement from a recent article by Joy Marcus should help to clarify this issue: "...there is a reality that cannot be stressed enough: psychotherapy as an agent of social change has great limitations. While one can correctly view radical psychiatry as a political activity—for the opposition stance we have taken in relation to Establishment psychiatry as well as for our advocacy against oppression in people's daily lives—anyone who is motivated to practice radical psychiatry because they believe it will effectuate deep systematic transformation of our society is making a serious mistake..." [17] Apparently even radical therapists believe that therapy has limits.

It should come as no surprise that Kovel's view of an "adequate ideological position for therapy" (251) in 20th century America is that therapy should limit itself to attempting to transform hysterical misery into ordinary unhappiness. Therapy should aim to alleviate neurotic distress (insofar as possible), and should declare at the outset that it can do nothing for those who suffer (only) from social alienation.

Kovel has prepared us for this conclusion in the first few pages of the "Introduction" when he tells us that his "therapeutic conservatism is combined with a rather radical political sensibility" (xiv). The implication seems to be that these two perspectives are inherently related and that a therapy which does not wish to beguile us with "false promises" must of necessity declare its powerlessness in regard to social alienation. This implication is strengthened by the following remark made in conjunction with the claim that we cannot conceive of the health of individuals apart from that of the social whole: "...for reasons we shall touch upon at the end of this work, there is as yet no therapy that takes more than faltering steps down this path" (the path leading to the health of the social whole) (44).

What are the reasons? They seem to be simply those stated earlier which insist on the distinction between neurotic misery and the ordinary unhappiness due to social alienation. But though this distinction has its uses, it alone cannot do justice to the question as to the complex relation between therapeutics and social alienation. Kovel seems to suppose that the distinction itself disposes of the question: "...what is needed is present help for those whose emotional patterns call out for it and, basically, social treatment fo the general alienation" (34). Although the medical metaphor suggests that "social treatment" would be therapeutic (would heal) the general alienation, the disjunction between "emotional help" and "social treatment" suggests that the two are inevitably distinct projects, and that they differ from each other in every respect. Kovel's remark thus seems to preclude the question as to whether any "social treatment" would or should have an explicit therapeutic dimension or component. But it seems to me that this is precisely the question which needs to be considered in any discussion which seeks to determine the role of therapeutics in late capitalism.

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a criterion which would determine what (if anything) could establish a therapeutic as "radical."

17. Joy Marcus, "Psychiatry, Work, and Powerlessness," *Issues in Radical Therapy*, No. 18 (Spring, 1977) p. 18.

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I would recast the topic of the relation of therapy and social alienation as the relation of therapy to social change. A full discussion of this subject would require another book, for it far exceeds the scope of the project Kovel has undertaken and the limits he has set himself. I do not intend to criticize him for not having written the book I would write. I want only to make two comments, the first has to do with his concept of social alienation, the second is in the nature of a concluding remark.

It is significant that Kovel never defines the parameters of social alienation; he never gives this term a content. He does not discuss the relation of social alienation to oppression (or internalized oppression), and most important, he does not discuss the relation of social alienation to work. In fact work is never mentioned as a component either of social alienation or neurosis except in passing (in connection with the inherent limitations of family therapy under monopoly capitalism). Social alienation appears as "the anomie and boredom of middle class life in late capitalism" (32), or as "the general alienation" (3). The distinction between neurotic misery and ordinary unhappiness becomes blurred. It is difficult to know "how to distinguish between neurotic misery and ordinary unhappiness, given the fact that each is generally interpenetrated with the other throughout the broad middle band of suffering common to the well fed middle classes in contemporary America" (166). Kovel does consider the relation between therapy and social alienation, but only from the point of view of the middle class. His comment about Rogerian therapy is typical. We learn that this therapy works best with "relatively non-neurotic people of the middle classes who are experiencing loneliness and isolation as a result of alienation" (116). We are quite likely to get the impression that alienation is a middle-class phenomenon (experience), and that while therapy might relieve some of the "feelings of alienation" (145), "for middle and upper class individuals, there is always the danger that it either borders on or is intrinsically productive of false consciousness and that it promotes a repressive joy and an abstract (choiceless) intimacy.[18] Kovel never considers whether a therapy might be socially progressive in terms of the alienation experienced by working class people and by oppressed groups generally. Perhaps it is because his concept of social alienation is so general that he is unable to imagine what a therapy might possibly contribute to the struggle against the ordinary unhappiness of social alienation.[19]

It is not only "social relations" in the abstract which enter into therapeutic theories and practices, it is also the (more) concrete oppressive structure which permeate and sustain these social relations. Sexism is no less present in therapeutics for being

18. The fact that the human potential movement has succeeded in developing "new therapeutic techniques, thus making social alienation directly accessible to therapy" is by no means a sign of social progress. Kovel discusses the obvious drawbacks of the human potential movement, the fact that it has "mainly been a province of those who could satisfy material needs and indeed could afford an extra share of the world." The "positive message" of the human potential movement is thus addressed to the "middle and upper classes, (who) unfulfilled by their wealth, (place) their hopes for fulfillment in the acquisition of the ultimate luxury, Joy..." (110). This point is well taken, but Kovel's discussion ends where it should really begin, with a consideration of therapeutics and the social alienation of those who are not members of the middle and upper classes.

19. The only unhappiness which is "accessible" to therapy is neurotic unhappiness. "All a therapy can offer is to relieve neurotic distress" (58). And since anybody can be neurotic (you don't have to be oppressed to be neurotic) it follows that, "therapy properly applied can be of real benefit in dealing with the neurotic distortions that can befall anybody, no matter what side of the social divide they happen to be on" (245).

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unrecognized, and the same holds true for racism and classism (the tendency to see all issues through the eyes of the comfortable or not so comfortable middle class). Kovel tends to discount these phenomena in his discussion; in particular as the above statements show, he ignores the way in which they may affect the practice of therapy and its "therapeutic effect."

There is one issue which should be clarified here. Kovel is entirely correct in saying "the right therapist could conceivably be of any identify" (245). He is also correct that to deny this would be "to read society too directly onto the individual" (*ibid.*). The point is not the identity of the therapist as an individual of a particular gender, race or class; the point, as Kovel notes, is that a good therapist must be able to envision "what another's inner life is like" (*ibid.*). This "envisioning" requires a sensitivity toward and a recognition of the ways in which oppression (sexism, racism, classism, etc.) distort that inner life. This is not a matter of imposing political categories upon people (which makes neither for good therapy nor for good politics); this is simply a matter of recognizing social facts. Furthermore, it is not only the "inner life" of the client which is at stake; at stake is also the therapists's "inner life"—as well as the outer life of both client and therapist. If indeed therapy is to proceed as Kovel says it should, "on the basis of a genuine respect for an individual's autonomy" (*ibid.*), then those who practice it must seek to acquire an awareness of the phenomena and the dynamics of oppression and they must be willing to struggle against them not only in their (political) lives, but in their (professional) practice as well.

In conclusion, a final comment on Kovel's perspective. Kovel bases his "therapeutic conservatism" both on Freud's discovery that civilization itself inevitably produces discontent, and on the consequence regarding therapy which Freud draws from this discovery; therapy cannot hope to do more than alleviate the more extreme aspects of the universal discontent.[20] What Freud himself did not investigate, and what people who use Freud's argument often overlook is the extent to which the discontent thus produced sustains and perpetuates the social order which produced the discontent in the first place. Kovel acknowledges this as regards neurotic misery but he stops short of recognizing the extent to which "ordinary unhappiness" has its own self-perpetuating dynamic.[21] It is not only "hysterical misery" which immobilizes people, it is also the quite ordinary unhappiness and the despair which comes from accepting unhappiness as the norm. The answer to this is not an ideological therapy which promises instant joy or instant anything else. But must we suppose that a therapeutic which would attempt to tackle the desperation of everyday life would have to fall into the goo of "positive therapy?" Kovel's warning stands: "when (therapy) promises liberation, transcendence, or the answer to the riddles of life, indeed when it becomes an end *in itself* offering the hope of happiness—then we may know we are being duped and distracted from more valid goals" (254).

There are any number of mistakes one should not make. One should not "totalize" therapy;[22] one should not conflate therapy and social change;[23] one should not

20. Compare the following remark by Marcuse: "Considering what civilization has made of man, the difference in the development of personalities is that between an unproportional and a proportional share of that 'everyday unhappiness' which is the common lot of mankind. The latter is all that therapy can achieve." (*Eros, op. cit.*, pp. 257-258).

21. Kovel credits Reich with being the first to argue this point.

22. To "totalize" therapy is to suppose that it could provide a solution to all conceivable problems. We should recall Kant's claim that reason founders and inevitably falls into contradictions when it attempts to conceive the notion of totality. Kovel's standpoint throughout

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fetishize therapy (the market does that anyway). Again we must agree with Kovel: "When fetishized therapy pretends that an inevitably limited personal reconciliation is adequate as a source of happiness, it is also necessarily implying that society as it exists provides adequate sources for happiness" (255).

The purpose of distinguishing between neurotic misery and social alienation is so that one does not make these mistakes, so that one "will seek appropriate remedies for each" (53). For Kovel, this means that one should "not believe that political participation will cure (one's) neurosis or that (one's) therapy will make one whit of difference in the larger disorder" (*ibid.*). I do not want to defend either of these beliefs; indeed they are both wrong. In fact one might call them the antinomies of therapeutic reason. And as with other antinomies, it is not only the particular claim which is at fault, but the assumption underlying both antithetical positions. In Kovel's case the faulty assumption is that an attempt to legitimize a therapeutic concerned with social alienation must founder on these two unsatisfactory alternatives; it is this assumption that I want to challenge. To put it more precisely, I want to suggest that there may well be a therapeutic dimension to social change and social struggle.

I have argued that social alienation must be concretized in terms of the specific content of the oppressive structures of sexism, racism, classism, etc., and I want to claim here that these oppressive structures have a psychological (emotional) dimension, though not a psychological cause. My point is that the psychological dimension of oppression has to be attacked on its own grounds, in terms of a strategy appropriate to its terrain and structure. At stake here is not only the notion of internalized oppression, but the more generalized phenomenon of an emotional attachment on the part of individuals to modes of thinking and feeling which recapitulate and perpetuate oppression at the level of individual consciousness. To attack the psychological dimension of oppression on its own grounds would mean to develop what I will call (for lack of a better term) an emancipatory subjective praxis—by which I mean a practice of subjectivity which focuses on an emotinal unlearning of the form and content of oppression. A subjective practice of this sort would be an aspect of but not a substitute for the larger political struggle. In this respect it would constitute a therapeutic dimension of social change. Kovel is right; the chances for the liberation depend upon people "making real demands on a world shaped by the lies of history" (259). But the struggle against an (objective) reality shaped by historical lies must also be a struggle against a subjectivity which believes them and colludes with them. It may be one of the merits of Kovel's book to have put

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the book is eminently Kantian. Indeed one could say that Kovel's dichotomy between therapeutic efficacy and social truth is the analogue of the Kantian dichotomy between theoretical and practical (moral) reason.

23. Some of Kovel's strictures as to the necessary limits of therapy are framed in language which could equally well apply to the limits of social change. Noting that therapy can only provide hope for greater freedom, and that the freedom in question can only be relative, Kovel says, "it (therapy) cannot promise absolute freedom for the simple reason that no such thing exists. Freedom is hewn out of limitations, and each program to increase freedom contains the germ of a new set of limits" (59). Similarly arguing that there can be no such thing as a "utopian" therapy, "that no therapy can be absolute or millenial," Kovel speaks of the "dilemma intrinsic to all therapy." That dilemma is nothing less than the following: "The fundamental problem has to do with the inherent limits of human truth itself and the grounding of our lives in contradiction" (60). This statement recalls a remark quited earlier: "nothing can be human unless it is paradoxical." If this is the case, it would certainly condition not only therapy, but also the possibilities for social change.

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this task on the agenda.

One concluding *caveat*: to suggest that there may be a therapeutic dimension to the struggle for social change, and that we may need an emancipatory subjective practice, in no way requires us to accept the incorrect and delusory assumption that our "true self" will emerge from the ruins of neurosis—or the rubble of ordinary unhappiness. To suggest that there may be a therapeutic dimension to the struggle for social change is not to suggest that social change does not need to occur, or that we have (already) achieved our "true self." To make this supposition would be to suppose what is patently false, that there could be an emancipated subjectivity in an unfree objectivity. On the contrary, the notion of an emancipatory subjective practice (the therapeutic dimension of social struggle) requires the distinction between an emancipated and an emancipatory subjectivity. By the latter I mean an anticipatory or "pre-figurative" subjectivity, a subjectivity whose task would be to create a reality in which it might then be possible for people to determine as Kovel says, "in which direction their true self lies."

Erica Sherover

Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* and *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: New Left Books, 1975.

First, a confession: I could not put down Anderson's two books; I read them like novels. Such an impact cannot simply be explained by the deft hand with which the author handles his enormous material, "telling the story" of an epoch or an empire in a fascinating manner. The enduring tension that lasts up to the conclusion known in advance, i.e., to the emergence of capitalism, stemmed from a different source: Anderson has written our *autobiography*, the *autobiography of Europe*. He has let Europe "tell its story." Of course, this is a result of reflection upon, and application of methodological principles formulated in the foreword and the conclusion, though they "disappear" in the story itself, where they are only implicit. Three methodological and theoretical premises make up the autobiographical character. 1) The emergence of capitalism is a *unique* phenomenon. 2) Capitalism is a specific product of Western Europe whose history, despite its uniqueness, is a *universal* history. 3) Genesis is inherent in structure: formally identical structures are not identical with each other if *they have a different genesis*: structures of different genesis have different *potentialities*. The past is not what has passed away. The past of a structure, a formation, etc., is inherent in its present.

Uniqueness as a premise of historiography provokes two objections. According to the first, the category of uniqueness restitutes *historicism*; according to the second, uniqueness can only be constituted from the viewpoint of the *end of history*. Historicism does not acknowledge any preferred reference systems not even the *present*; and thus the "end of history" is nonsensical from the viewpoint of historicism. Similarly, history from the viewpoint of the *end* of history is not understandable without *evolutionism*, since history is thereby only interpretable as a process leading to a *conclusion*. Whether we are confronted with a progressive or a regressive evolution, with a fulfilment or a collapse, evolutionism contradicts historicism's fundamental principles. Of course, the representation of historical processes as unique does not

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necessarily imply historicism, and Anderson intends to communicate much more to us. He not only *represents* the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe as a *unique* process, but contrasts this uniqueness with the concept of *necessity*. According to him, no necessity could account for the fact that the feudal mode of production emerged from the slave mode of production, nor that the former gave birth to capitalism. The *succession* of these modes of production in Western Europe can always be understood and explained in terms of the European past. The combination of understanding and explanation is particularly relevant here. If Anderson's method consisted in a mere explanation, he would substitute individual determinism for the principle of general laws of development which he rejects, i.e., a kind of empirical naturalism substituted for structuralist naturalism. Insofar as the past is inherent in the present (the genesis in the structure), we can understand it only as a past inherent in our present. Consequently, understanding itself leads to this explanation of history since understanding and causality presuppose one another.

Anderson explains (and understands) the uniqueness of European history in terms of the fact that European feudalism is built on antiquity and that the latter never perished in Western European feudalism thus enabling emergent bourgeois society to *synthesize* antiquity and feudalism. In Anderson's historiography a predominant role is played by periods in which the synthesis in question becomes very significant—the 12th century and the Renaissance. Undoubtedly, it is not Anderson's innovation to see a social revolution in the 12th century (recall Barraclough), and to recognize the Renaissance central place in European development. Here, however, it is not the novelty that concerns us but their distinction. Further, for Anderson there are not only *temporally* distinguished periods but even European space is divided into two "hemispheres." The territory east of the Elbe receives a negative evaluation: Eastern Europe failed to realize the Western European synthesis and lacked autochtonous development. The application of Western European "patterns" was "blended" (and not synthetized) with autochtonous systems. The result was retardation and backwardness.

The contention that capitalism is a Western European product simply means that history as the *autobiography of Western Europe* is concluded here, though this is not the same as the conclusion of history in general. That Anderson puts an end to his story at this point is not identical with his viewpoint. According to Anderson, Western Europe already aimed at a relative universalization before industrial capitalism. The significance of absolute monarchy consists in that it was the first universalized state form. In later developments industrial capitalism will expand this process of universalization. Even if we reject Marx's assumption that capitalism will spread over the whole globe with the speed of wildfire, it certainly exhibited a *tendency* toward universalization. One need only refer to the United States: the history of capitalism cannot be described as an autobiography of Western Europe. Consequently, the emergence of capitalism is far from being "the end of history;" it is solely the end of the *uniqueness* that led to its emergence. But that is precisely why the history of Western Europe can be presented as *universal history*. It is a unique history that produces a mode of production and a social formation which not only can but also is *aimed at* being universalized.

Intentionality is important here since if we look for mankind's most universal formations we shall *not* find them in capitalism. Clearly, bands, tribes and chiefdoms were once the most "universal" social structures. This factual universality was a result

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of several autochtonous developmental lines. Those living in tribes and in chiefdoms might have coexisted (even for centuries) without finding in chiefdom a more advanced model for an intentional transformation of the structure of their existence. Since the *autochtonous development* of the formation was unique, its univeraslization could only be intentional and *anti-organic*. As Anderson shows, it took place in that manner even in Japan, though it was the only instance of feudalism outside Europe. It required an outside capitalism to trigger the rapid capitalistic transformation of Japanese society. The end of the unique history of Europe is, consequently, not the end of history *in general*, but the *beginning* of the universalization of a novel type.

The question whether Anderson is an evolutionist is not so easily answered. For one thing, "evolutionism" has various meanings. If we mean a linear theory of evolution according to which every *successive* mode of production is *superior* to the previous one in its *totality*, Anderson is unambiguously *not* an evolutionist. First of all, he handles temporality very carefully (temporal succession is not identical with structural succession): in his analysis, mode of production as such is *not* a totalizing concept. At the same time, he accepts and applies two notions of evolution. One is evolution as a "learning process." If a social condition, a partial social structure, an institution, a social relation comes into existence, various forms of it are put to the test through the aid of the learning process, in adjustment to *other processes*, in acting upon, or in interdependence with them, in the trial and error of conscious human intentions, until it attains to a form capable of functioning that becomes in turn a kind of tradition. That is how Anderson describes the emergence of the English parliamentary system.

The second notion of evolution presupposes this "learning process," but is not identical with it. Whatever *has already been learnt* will not necessarily perish with the society in which it has taken place, and may remain "available" for other social formations, even after centuries. This is a kind of a *theory of objectifications* based on the interdependence of needs and objectifications. Needs *in statu nascendi* can find their objects in already existing objectifications, and *vice versa*: already existing objectifications which had been "discovered" by new needs, may become constitutive with respect to needs and thereby society as a whole. "Building new layers one atop the other" is not only possible in respect to the means of production, but institutions as well—and it is this process that transcends the various modes of production. This is exemplified in the most convincing and detailed manner by Anderson's "biography" of Roman law. The very idea of "European synthesis" would become inconceivable without this type of a theory of objectification. Since there is an ever increasing amount of what "has already been learnt," Anderson's theory is not lacking a *general theory* of evolution. Thus, although Anderson does not *philosophically* elaborate on the idea of the uniqueness of Western European development, this is by no means historicism nor does it result in a philosophy of the "end of history" but it is the consequence and application of a new *theory of evolution*.

The analysis of the interrelation of genesis and structure in history leads Anderson to deny any role to the development of personality or to artistic creation. The *model* of a social structure necessarily brackets the genesis of the structure. It relates all aspects of the structure and thereby homogenizes them. Thus, the model abstracts from such essential aspects of *human praxis* as *contents* that have become the flesh and blood of living people, their customs and ways of life. The latter, however, have as much potentialities for the future as the interrelated aspects of the structural models since genesis is carried not only by institutions, but by persons related to the institutions in

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question. The detotalization of structures means the rediscovery of the traditions of those who had created, sustained, or struggled against them within the model.

Anderson's method of detotalization, among other things, leads to the conscious rejection of the historical-philosophical correlation between contingency and necessity whereby necessity "in general" is realized through many instances of contingency. That dialectic is replaced here by the dialectic of *inherence and substance*: anything that appears as inherence in one structure may become substantial during the transformation of the structure. This is how Anderson analyzes the abolition of serfdom in Western Europe in the 14th century. Instead of arguing that the abolition of serfdom resulted from contingent factors like the plague, he claims that, as a consequence of various inherences (such as the presence of towns which never had serfdom and which never vanished from Italy) and because of certain dysfunctions in the existing structure (lack of economic stability, famine, etc.) *specific processes* leading to the abolition of serfdom resulted from peasant uprisings stemming from *both* factors.[1]

Although Anderson introduces an entirely new approach to historiography, he is not always very clear. He employs the slave, the feudal and the capitalist modes of production for the most general "periodization" of European history. Yet, unless the mode of production is dissociated from its main productive class (slave, serf, proletarian), Anderson's conceptual division would not correspond to the periods to which he applies them (so, e.g., feudalism should disappear with the abolition of serfdom). Occasionally, Anderson fails to do so and falls into inconsistencies. The ambiguity disappears, however, if we recognize that "modes of production" are not categories, but regulative *theoretical principles* in the Kantian sense. Categories of *social formations* are subsequently elaborated through these principles. Thus, Anderson can ascribe various social formations to a mode of production and he can analyze many social formations as specific combinations of various modes of production.

Thus, Anderson's notion of social formations, as he himself indicates, is different from the Marxian one. The moot point is the idea of the secondary conditioned character of institutional systems. For Anderson, the whole institutional social system especially the state, and the legal system, are *equally important* constituents of social forms. Accordingly, early medieval feudalism cannot be understood without the *fief-system* and late feudalism without the *absolutist state*. Consequently, the analysis of law and of the state occupies such an important role in Anderson's history of Europe. Yet, although these analyses are convincing, the same cannot be said of his *mode of reasoning* or his *final conclusions*. There is a *logical contradiction* between them.

In Marx's description of precapitalist societies, exploitation was a result of extra-economic coercion, while capitalism is characterized by economic coercion. As a consequence, for both Lukács and Anderson, precapitalist historical formations economy had not yet been separated from the non-economic spheres, so that the latter are equally important in the constitution of social formations. Here, the conclusion is

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1. Inherence is not identical with contingency. It only becomes *degraded* to contingency in the structural models. So if one departs from the purely structural model of "feudalism," polis-like towns would play a contingent role. Yet Western European feudalism could only function *with them*, and it cannot be meaningfully reconstructed without them.

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true but the premises false. No functioning society can subsist by mere coercion, let alone realize its "learning processes." Political coercion exists in every class society, but it cannot become the basic element of any social formation. But if such was the case, in capitalism, where economic coercion is prevalent, state, law and politics do *not* play a constitutive role in the social formation. This is *not* Anderson's contention but on the contrary, he argues that, as a consequence of their development, the productive forces do not destroy obsolete productive and social relations. Social relations become primary and have to be transformed first in order to allow for the development of new productive forces. But if this is a *general* claim, it must hold true for capitalism just as much as for previous modes of production. In that case, however, explanation in terms of both "extraeconomic" and "economic coercion" becomes entirely irrelevant.

Here Anderson could not resist the temptation of general social laws of development. But his substitution of the dialectic of inherence-substance for that of contingency-necessity precludes any *general laws of development*. One can understand Anderson's points if he simply reversed the Marxian conception of the law of development in the "Preface" to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Present trends of industrial development undermine any reasons for optimism. As a consequence, today social relations, legal relations and state structures, cannot be regarded as secondary. Clearly, Anderson's theoretical efforts seek to answer pressing contemporary questions. It remains questionable, however, whether to do so it is necessary to formulate "general laws of development" in history.

The least convincing arguments in the two books are those in the first two chapters. It is already problematic to denote the "slave mode of production" as the first European one. Even the title of the first volume *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, questions this use since the "slave mode of production" cannot fulfill the function assigned to it and, furthermore, this inadequate principle prevents him from grasping the importance of the classical Greek world. Of course, Anderson's predilliction for the "slave mode of production" over "antiquity" is *empirically* connected with his general conception. Among ancient societies it is the Roman Empire and Western Christianity which is decisive for him—a formation which typifies slave labor *within* antiquity. Since for Anderson antiquity is identical with Roman Empire, it can thus be described as a "slave mode of production."

The result is that what was *specific* to the classical Greek world (the structure of the Athenian city-state, the *polis* and Athenian direct democracy) loses its significance in Anderson for whom the "ideal type" of Athens is not the period of Kleisthenes' reforms (as it is with Vernant), but the forth century B.C. What is overlooked here are precisely the political conditions defining the specificity of social formations. Marx (who is repeatedly criticized by Anderson for neglecting these relations) *in this case* brilliantly preformed the required analyses and discovered that slave economy *dissolves* (instead of constituting) the classic form of the city-state. Anderson's characterization of Athens in terms of the "slave mode of production" leads him into several dead ends such as that ancient Greek philosophy allegedly despised work. This statement is all the more outragious since at that time in Athens the concept of work "in general" *did not even exist*.[2] A second serious problem: autocratic state ought not

2. But at the same time, it is well known that we owe the most brilliant analysis of work to Aristotle (the Marxian version in the first volume of *Capital* relies heavily on it). This would not be worth mentioning (the analysis of Athens occupies an insignificant place in the book) were it not connected with the fact that it is the *territorial* identity between the borderlines of the Roman

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to be identified with the form of domination usually called *despotism*. While despotism is built on traditional formations, the function of autocracy is the "subversion" of traditional social relations. Societies subjected to autocratic régimes take on a new character in the process. It is not rare for autocracy to upset even traditional property relations, alter and shift the balance of power between classes and social strata, etc. That is why an autocratic régime always effects all of society and not only its "upper regions."

It is important to grasp this "subversive" function of autocracy in order to understand why modern European absolutist monarchies (especially the French) had such an enormous impact. If we want to understand Voltaire's flirtation with Frederic the Great, Diderot's with the Empress Catherine, we have to grasp the influence of autocracy. Time and again, illusions are attached to autocracy: the wise, the good autocrat will execute the great changes in the interest and in behalf of all, in the spirit of Reason. Many socialists thought politically in terms of autocracy when they subordinated all domains of social existence to the direction of one center. In his book on the French Revolution, Janurès even demonstrates that several measures of the Jacobin dictatorship simply consisted in the extension of the patterns of absolutist monarchy. Anderson breaks with the theory of "enlightened despotism." For him, absolutist monarchy is a *conservative* formation in that it means the domination of the state over all domains of social existence, the autocracy of the state together with the (partially traditional, partially "meritocratic") power of a noble estate. Whatever steps were made during the absolutist monarchy on behalf of the development of industry, commerce, the productive forces, absolutist monarchy still remained a politically conservative order, the exact *opposite* of bourgeois society. Bourgeois society and the bourgeois state presuppose one another. Were it not so, argues Anderson, it would not have been necessary for the bourgeoisie to overthrow absolutist monarchy everywhere in order to establish bourgeois society.

Anderson denies that absolutist monarchy had created a "state of equilibrium" between bourgeois society and the society of estates, or that it was the manifestation of such a state of equilibrium. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of this thought and its consistent application to the analysis itself. At the same time, a certain lack of conceptual clarity also characterizes his train of thought here, although only in certain theoretical escapades and not in the historical reconstruction itself. The lack of conceptual clarity consists in the *identification* of bourgeois society and capitalism. Undoubtedly, there was a strengthening of capitalism everywhere during the age of absolutism. It is undeniable that the absolutist monarchy supported certain forms of

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Empire and those of Western Europe that grounds the choice of the principle of the "slave mode of production." The existence and significance of the territorial interconnection cannot be questioned. All that however, cannot be separated from the relative continuity of the form of the *polis*, as is later analyzed by Anderson himself; from the fact that not even the burghers' medieval town can be understood independently of the assimilation of the ancient city-state. It is precisely this structural relation that would have rendered indispensable the emphasis on the *polis* form in analyzing antiquity, not to mention the fact that during the time of the birth of bourgeois society the *polis* democracy—both in its Greek and Roman versions—as an *objectification* and as an institution *became* an aspect of the European tradition that could not have been discarded in the learning processes of new institutions. *Today* it is no longer possible to understand Greek antiquity as the prehistory of Byzantium, even if it falls within that territory. Anderson's negative evaluation of the "Byzantine social formation" cannot be extended to Greek antiquity because of territorial interconnections which, in this case, becomes a mere *empirical* fact.

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capitalism. It cannot be questioned that Marx and Engels (at least as far as the bulk of their argument is concerned) identified capitalism with bourgeois society. Yet, one can also not deny that it was organically connected with their theory of the *priority* of the development of productive forces. We have seen, however, that Anderson not only rejects, but reverses this interconnection. The identification thus loses its meaning within his conceptual framework. If mode of production and social formations are differentiated in Anderson's manner, we can then say that absolutist monarchy is *a* social formation in which various modes of production could be combined, while bourgeois society with a bourgeois state adequate to it is *another* social formation, similarly *capable* of the combination of various modes of production. It is merely a matter of applying Anderson's conceptual framework, if—in opposition to him—I distinguish bourgeois society (or rather civil society) from capitalism.

Anderson analyzes in detail the absolutist monarchies' *mercantile* economic policy seeking the accumulation of *national wealth*. This policy did not simply seek to accumulate precious metals as an end in itself; accumulation was but a means to promote and support commercial capital, plantation capital and national manufacturing industry. It did not merely result in building fortunes, but also in the emergence of needs without which production on a large industrial scale—through the industrial revolution—could not have come into being. Prosperous capitalists (by purchasing noble titles) gained positions within the statis power structure. Yet, all of this does not warrant calling this society and the state "expressing" it, bourgeois.

Within this framework it is not appropriate to discuss the distinction between bourgeois society and the bourgeois state on the one hand, and capitalism and their mutual interrelation, on the other. I can only mention here that bourgeois society and the bourgeois state pertaining to it had first been expressed in the constitution of the United States and in the Declaration of Independence. Anderson cites Engels' more than witty statement that pure feudalism had only existed but once: in the constitution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, i.e., in a context when a social relation was "exported" and at the same time created by its most radical representatives (in that case, by the crusader knights). Something similar happened with the formation of the United States. The tendencies towards bourgeois society emerged in England, as its most radical representatives "exported" their own social relations and principles into the New World, creating on "virgin soil" their own bourgeois state. The historical point is that at the time of the emergence of bourgeois society and of the bourgeois state, industrial capitalism in America was more undeveloped than anywhere in Western Europe and *no forms of capitalism at all* can be found in the North-Eastern states (where there were no plantations). The first bourgeois society and bourgeois state had been created by farmers, artisans and merchants. The later (and rapid) development of capitalism created a *contradiction* unknown in contemporary Western Europe: the contradiction between political equality and economic inequality.[3] It was this contradiction that Thomas Cooper, the American economist (quoted by Marx) had in mind when he proposed the *abolition* of universal suffrage as a solution. In Western Europe, on the other hand, it was through struggles that the *working-class movement* led to the creation of a bourgeois state adequate to bourgeois society, despite the bourgeoisie's efforts from the 19th century to the present (literally to the present, since in Spain it is still a struggle in progress). This difference accounts for the

3. The analysis of that phenomenon can be seen in Marx's 1848 article, "Die moralisierende Kritik und die kritisierende Moral."

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fact that the Western European working class, unlike its counterpart in the United States, became not only an economic but also a *political class.*

To the extent that the *bourgeois-democratic state* in Western Europe could only come about through working class struggles, it is not the only possible political form of bourgeois society. But to return to Anderson's problem: absolutist monarchy did not tolerate *any* form of pluralism. It abolished even the pluralism that had existed in feudalism: the duality between Church and state power, the function of the Estates-General. The history of the many "Louis" was one of bloody oppression of all forms of opposition, be they Huguenots, Jansenists, or burghers and peasants nearly collapsing under the burdens of levies. They held such an unconditional supremacy over society that it had no restraint even with regard to the slightest manifestations of everyday life. The establishment of a *police de robe* may sound ridiculous, but its characteristic feature cannot be denied. The urban bourgeoisie, the "preproletariat" and even the peasantry were actually forced to overthrow this state in order to establish any form of bourgeois society. It was only *political violence* that could put an end to the unconditional supremacy of the absolutist states: political revolutions or wars or the combination of the two (a lost war and a war of independence, a lost war and inner political pressure). Thus, absolutist monarchy and with it the power of feudal aristocracy ceased to exist. The latter's social foundations had either been destroyed with one stroke or had gradually weakened and adjusted to the structure of bourgeois society and of the bourgeois state.

Needless to say, the disappearance of absolutism in European history does not at all mean the definitive vanishing of autocratic states. Moreover, it was precisely the 20th century that witnessed the imminent danger of the universalization of the autocratic state in Europe. At any rate, the story of the danger (and of its removal) does not belong in an analysis of Anderson's book.

The history of absolutism in Anderson's book is the history of *various* absolutisms: the "parallel biographies" of Western European forms of absolutism are followed by those of Eastern European types. That Anderson tells the story of the various forms of absolutisms separately is related to his previously discussed general methodological principles which are applicable to historiography only in such a manner. Inherence becoming substance is decisive not only in the succession of modes of production and social formations respectively, but also with respect to the development of the same social formation. *To what extent* absolutism was absolute in the various empires of Western and Eastern Europe, is not at all independent either of prehistory, or of contemporary inherences. In that respect the length of its historical span in not an indifferent factor. The above inherences play, in turn, a considerable role in the *mode* of overthrowing absolutism, and in the historical process that is beyond the scope of the book. As far as Western Europe is concerned, in England absolutism had never been as "absolute" as in Spain or in France. Accordingly, Queen Elisabeth's reign cannot be described in terms of "absolute monarchy." Elsewhere Anderson mentions the result of this state of affairs; the lower level of consciousness of the English bourgeoisie as compared to that of the French. On the other hand, in Eastern Europe Austria failed for a long time to establish absolutism, mostly because of the nobles-inspired Hungarian resistance. Here, it was Prussia and Russia that constituted the embodiment of absolutism.

Here as elsewhere, Anderson is most cautious in speaking of general "advantages" or "disadvantages!" On the one hand, because what is "advantage" in one respect, may

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become a "disadvantage" in another (cf. the characteristic traits of English absolutism); on the other, because the given "disadvantage" may have its "advantageous" results in a new historical period. This dubious methodological procedure insures that the history presented by Anderson never becomes a mere catalogue; nor does it lead to any unambiguous historical "lesson." Various historical lessons can be drawn from his analyses. The readers are granted the *liberty* to reach their *own* conclusions. The analyses do *guide* us, but in a cautious, non-dogmatic, and non-scholastic manner, which does not rule out the *possibility of a pluralistic interpretation*. That is why others will probably draw conclusions differing from mine, and they will be justified in doing so. I only maintain that the premises from which I drew my conclusions are unambiguously present in Anderson's own books.

Agnes Heller

Philip Slater, *Foothold*. New York: Dutton, 1977.
Philip Slater, *Earthwalk*. New York: Anchor, 1974.

Those acquainted with Slater's earlier work are likely to experience *Footholds* as a distinct *déja vu*. That this book was written by the author of *The Pursuit of Loneliness* can hardly be doubted and the reminders on both front covers quickly become superfluous. The themes of these books, particularly *Earthwalk*, are, however, familiar not only from Slater's own earlier work, but also from the many thinkers—published and otherwise—who have inspired the imagination of the counter-cultural and New Left movements in America. In *Earthwalk*, Slater has collected what are perhaps the most important of these, brilliantly shaped them into a sweeping panorama of the failings and needs of a crippled American culture, portrayed with a passion that perhaps tries to be restrained but never hides its bitterness. While the book does not provide the missing links between the recurring sociological themes of the period—the urge to "pathological growth," the technological obsession, urban alienation, schizoid insensitivity, etc.—it does give a certain impressionistic sense of their coherence. Slater's penchant and talent for metaphor, the suave sophistication of his style, smoothly lace together the otherwise small wisdoms of everyday observation—the viability of which is always so difficult to defend—into a full-blown picture of a hard-driven American culture. Like a super-sized blow-up with remarkably fine resolution, the effect is overwhelming.

But this is not all praise. For in the midst of the appeal of Slater's stunning cleverness, his talent for evocative language, his profound sensitivity to "where it's at," there are things about his approach, even about his impressive style, that I find almost as deeply disturbing as the view of American culture he lays before us. *Earthwalk* is a Siren's Song, powerful, seductive, luring, as is every equally masterful polemic. It does not reason through argument, but beguiles through the impact of associative allusion. Slater is a master of artful suggestiveness, that true medium of American Madison Avenue culture. The politics are different, but that winsome *Time* magazine style is still there: loaded but digestible—and swift, for impatient children of the McLuhan age who can't concentrate on one thing long enough to determine whether it is consistent with the next. Slater's work builds its persuasiveness on the impressionability

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of this fragmented and stimulus-addicted consciousness, feeds it contradictory vignettes of guru-like wisdom while criticizing its susceptibility to them. In this and a number of other ways *Earthwalk* doublebinds the reader who takes seriously the social miseries its author so eloquently decries. How *does* one respond to a book that sets up a relation between the reader and the author-qua-expounder that couldn't be more opposed to the "anti-prophet" ideal or collectivist ethics its author supposedly hails? Which of these conflicting messages are we meant to take the more seriously, the purported one or the subliminal one?

For all its insight *Earthwalk* stands deeply at odds with its own intentions, blithely allowing itself luxuries it denies everyone else. It is surely not lost on the author that it is precisely that slick visual and verbal urbanity that is the delight, or envy, of the American soul. The penchant for this is what made Johnny Carson a star, *Psychology Today* a success, Norman Mailer and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. the quintessential American writers, and the advertising and public relations industry one of the biggest pools of talent and creativity in the country. No less than these Slater's book exudes that high-Americana polish and flash, chock full of those little brilliances that win attention and admiration—and are meant to.

I'm picking on Slater for this, for his not-so-hard-to-discern interest in his own show, because he is picking on the rest of us for it and I think that is unfair. It is not on account of any proletarian ethics of my own that would condemn those who promote their talents or make a showing above the crowd that I find this irksome. It is rather because Slater has set *himself* up as the moralizer on this account, and that I find disingenuous at best. At worst, because it is intertwined with habits of projection, it is dangerous.

The major theme of both *The Pursuit of Loneliness* and *Earthwalk* is the condemnation of the desire for individual achievement and acclaim. I can readily agree that we could all stand to benefit from the reduction of this lust for success—particularly by that segment of the population (defined by their sex, race, class and background) altogether too accustomed to it. Slater's attitude toward this, however, borders on the hysterical. *The Pursuit of Loneliness* ends: "We tell each other chilling stories of individuals in imagined societies of the future being forced to give up their dreams for the good of the group, of not being allowed to stand out. But this, in some degree, is just the price we must pay for a tolerable life in a tolerable community. . . .It is the structured narcissism of the old culture that brings down upon our heads all of the evils we detest, and we will escape these evils when we have abandoned the narcissistic dreams that sustain them. . . .Nothing stands in our way except our invidious dreams of personal glory. Our horror of group coercion reflects our reluctance to relinquish these dreams. . .If we can overcome this horror, however, and mute this vanity, we may be able to take up our original utopian task" (150).

But who, I want to ask after reading lines like this, is this "we?" As one review has suggested, "It is not an editorial 'we' nor a scientific 'we' but more like a Royalist 'we'."[1] It is the same "we" who narrates *Earthwalk*. It is meant to seduce the reader into thinking that his or her station in life, not to mention opportunities, are just the same as the writer's. It is only a matter now of giving them up.

"There is something a little eerie," Slater writes, "about 200 million people slavishly

1. Bennett Berger, in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 77, No. 1.

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adhering in the same unhappy way to a norm of personal independence and uniqueness" (56). To be sure this statement has its dramatic effect, as do all those quotable-quotes that fill nearly every page of this book. The question is—and here comes that troublesome business of facts—is it true? One might start by cutting it down by the millions of American women who have been devoutly reading *The Total Woman*. Then that group 18 months old and younger might have a good argument for exemption. And what of those in old folks homes or social security who have to split a can of Campbell's soup to last the two days before the next check comes? "...[S]lavishly adhering in the same unhappy way to a norm of personal independence and uniqueness?" It seems to me it would be possible to make quite a list of exceptions here, but perhaps the point is clear. Slater's reduction of all our social ills to the lust for individual achievement needs to be reduced even further—to that group of people for whom it is actually true: the (primarily) men who hold positions of prestige, wealth and influence, and those younger (primarily) men who are offered the opportunity to take over that status should they so choose. Though Slater makes some vague reference to this in the preface under "A Note on Language" (only language?), it does little to counter the massive generalization in the rest of the book.

The lack of any class differentiation is a serious flaw in *Earthwalk* (and *The Pursuit of Loneliness*), not just because it doesn't measure up to some schoolmarm Marxist rule that it always has to be there, but because its absence undercuts the whole project of this book, leaves it trapped in the same self-absorbed loneliness out of which it hopes to lead the way. How can a book that champions "interpersonal sensitivity," "attunement," "reconnection," i.e., that "people's lives and experiences [be] shared to a degree that permits reliable awareness of one another's emotional location," fail to recognize that there *are* those—by the millions—who don't belong in that "we?" There seems to be a narcissism as bold as any in the inability to see other than one's own reflection in those 200 million faces. (Was my mother the Avon lady having any "invidious dreams of personal glory" as she went from door to door? Or has my father spent thirty years working in a department store because he never managed to 'mute his vanity' or overcome his fear of coercion by others? It may very well be because he did manage.)

The distortion that arises from the lack of class differentiation also cripples terribly Slater's sociological perspicacity on the prescriptive side: the blanket use and abuse of the term "individualism" devolves from this lack. No distinction is made between individualism as a *real* modus operandi, and individualism as an ideological depection for those not in a position to practice it. Thus Slater perpetuates one, actually two, of the greatest ideological and conservative myths of American society: that individual enterprise and the upward mobility that is its goal is alive and well in America, and concurrently, that there are no class limitations on this achievement (America is a classless society). Slater's analysis would never be able to comprehend that fellow in the hardhat, for example, who staunchly defends the ideology of individualism precisely because he long ago had to give it up in practice.

Because of his refusal to fill out the constituency for the individualism he decries, Slater is left with a hollowed abstraction onto which all evil can be projected and then disposed of in one tidy ideological package. The dangers of this are high because one never knows what is going out in that package. For example, the longest chapter in *Earthwalk*, called (Benton & Bowles would love it) "The Ugly Swan or Curbing the Prophet Motive," is a scathing condemnation of the would-be hero-prophets in our

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culture. Slater uses this term to apply quite generally—we are *all* supposedly hot on the pursuit of our own heroism. He equates these with individualism, which he in turn explains as a kind of "mutationhood:" What we see around us now is a social system whose highest priority is given over to the manufacture of mutations. This is essentially what the concept of individualism is all about—the elevation of the peripheral instance to a position of centrality. For the past two centuries Western culture has been moving rapidly toward a system in which every single individual would be socialized to be a heroic castoff—a prophet mutation for a core system which would thereby have ceased to exist...Americans are trained from infancy for mutationhood" (75).

I think it is possible to sympathize with Slater's distress over the atomistic isolation of the individual devoted to his own interests and self-aggrandizement, and still find his "mutation" theory positively chilling. I am not at all convinced that this attitude is even remotely conducive to the more humane society we might hope for the future. In spite of all of Slater's intimidation, I admit it still reminds me of the images from those futuristic novels like Zamyatin's *We*. Later, however, he tells us not to worry over these "bogey-books about overintegrated societies (*1984, Brave New World, We, Fahrenheit 451*)" (56), that fear of these comes from "our" individualistic bias, and it wouldn't be like that anyhow (though he says markedly little about how it *would* be).

I would like to think Slater is right about this, but his own book does little to inspire confidence. To evoke Hegel, a better society cannot be made out of the mere antitheses to the old one; this only gives the backside of the same scene. It seems to me that individualism and collectivism are more related to each other, as extremes often are, than to anything in the middle. The anxiety that no one be permitted to excel to my mind bespeaks individualistic values far more than collective ones. Collectivist behavior from "individualist" motivation is one combination that Slater has not considered,[3] not consciously anyhow. That is unfortunate because it may be the worst

2. This theme of the individual as a mutation is left over from *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, where he also writes, "Individualism is a kind of desperate plea to save all mutants on the grounds that we do not know what we are or what we need. As such it is horribly expensive—a little like setting a million chimps banging on a typewriter on the grounds that eventually one will produce a masterpiece" (28).

3. By a neat trick of intellectual legerdemain Slater manages to equate individualism with authoritarianism, making the "anti-conformity critics" authoritarians by either will or default. Slater writes: "The anti-conformity critics, therefore, helped create precisely what they were attacking. By heaping scorn on social responses fundamental to humankind, they helped further the process of disconnection in society, thus making the population ever more vulnerable to authoritarian and impersonal manipulation. For the forms in which conformity and authoritarianism appear in modern society are a *product* of the ideology of freedom and individualism—desperate and shamefaced efforts to fill the hole left by the every-man-should-strive-to-be-a-lonely-genius-head-and-shoulders-above-the-worthless-gregarious-dependent-masses-guilt-trip" (55). I can only wish Slater had taken this last more seriously. The danger I write about might have been more apparent—but that would have thrown the individualist vs. collectivist polemic out of kilter. It is a skewed and shifty argument (suggestion) like this that makes this a dishonest book. If I can again quote another reviewer who hits it exactly: "It is a web of contradictions so constant and so blatant that it's hardly possible to say anything about it except that the author should have postponed gratification while he thought his own and his mentors' ideas through. Some of his contradictions appear to be unconscious, notably the expression of the anti-technological vision in a series of labored metaphors about systems, circuitry and feedback loops. Others are occasioned by his own critical faculties, as he sees the implications of what he's already overstated and hurries to cancel them out." Sara Sanborn, *The New York Times Book Review*, Jan. 20, 1974, page 3. For one more example of this, see page 167 of *Earthwalk* for the

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kind. Doesn't the watchdog or stylized collectivity those futuristic novels warn about grow out of just this sort of celebration of the abstraction? It's not a real sympathy for others that forms the basis of such societies but rather collectivism as an almost metaphysical ideal that can do lipservice to connectedness while disguising the actual lack of it. This puts all the responsibility elsewhere and no one actually has to begin with the real thing. And I wonder to what extent decrying individualism *per se* could eventually excuse us from having to do the demanding psychological work of recognizing the selfhood and particular needs and individual humanity of the next guy? Couldn't this kind of society even be the quite natural evolutionary consequence of the old narcissistic one? Again, the fear of those futuristic societies may come from what at least some of those who fear them already know all too well.

The danger here is perhaps the danger involved in any revolution conducted with proselytizing logic. If only Slater had at least teased himself about the fact that his whole endeavor contradicts the ideals he preaches to the rest of us, he might have produced a more honest book, more true to its own intentions, more useful in bringing about the changes he envisons. Instead he excuses himself: "Authors of books like this one are fond of imagining themselves to be the cause of future change. They dream of having themselves recorded in history books as having fostered some new trend... But books are expressions, not causes of change. Through them we alert each other that our heads are undergoing some alteration in response to the conditions around us and the feeling those conditions have engendered" (162). It is also surely not on account of the author's altruistic communal ethics that he makes only a modicum of effort to acknowledge his mentors and sources, and when he does the wording is very careful so as not to really give any credit away: "Those that seem to pluck the strongest chords of recognition in me are..." (5). And these are the examples that should have been the exceptions.

Reading this book can perhaps inversely give a sense of what a more "collectivist" approach might be. It would I think above all show an appreciation of the reader by trying to work *for* him or her (more than for the author), by trying to provide a fair presentation of the evidence at hand so that the reader's own capacity for critical reason is respected and encouraged; by trying to be honest in treatment of sources for the reader who is not going to be able to check it all out; by trying to be consistent, not as some logical ideal, but because not to care at all about this shows a certain contempt for the reader and a lack of interest in *giving* him or her something as an equal. Slater's work fails on all these accounts.

And then there is that question of theory. Slater's work is in desperate need of a theory that would weigh all the insights and discern the degree of truth in each. But that would mean they could not all be milked equally and the verbal mileage to be gotten out of each of them would be considerably reduced. One gets the impression the author just doesn't have time for this, nor can he afford the selection, frantically anxious as he appears to be to stamp his name on every new idea in the wind. In the end, but largely against the grain, Slater's book proves his own thesis: that egoism is not a useful or constructive basis for making a more human society or even for writing good social criticism and theory.

In spite of all this criticism, however, I think *Earthwalk* can be an important and potentially useful book, not so much as it is read at face value but as itself a

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two-line retraction of the individualism and collectivism polarity that characterizes this whole book.

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sociological artifact. Read between the lines and within the boundaries of those sociological groups to which it most directly applies, it tells a very revealing story, a sort of struggle for class consciousness from the top down. When Slater writes, "Too great a deviation from the normal degree of inflow and outflow is disturbing to our sense of our own boundaries, which means that *too little influence, stimulation, control, or whatever, from outside is just as likely to be experienced as an invasion of our being as too much, even though we have been trained not to perceive it*" (49)—I can't help but feel that this is an outcry against the very real deprivations of spoiledness, especially as felt by men and the better-off in our society and most acutely where those two groups intersect. But as worthy as this response may be, it becomes much less so when dictated with the same unaware elitism that kept the "old culture" going by encouraging everyone to identify with upper-echelon political ideals as their own. The making of one class's consciousness can well be the undoing of another's (and this goes for men and women too). We won't all be making the same revolution to get to that sweeter future.

Footholds is a quieter book than either *Earthwalk* or *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, perhaps in part due to the editorship of Slater's daughter, Wendy Slater Palmer. The excesses of the earlier books are to a considerable extent reduced, which to my mind can only make *Footholds* a better book, although those already familiar with Slater's previous work may not find it as interesting simply because it covers familiar ground, which is, of course, only to be expected in a book composed largely of previously written articles or chapters of books. Nevertheless, Slater's style can carry interest a long way, and for those who have not yet given much thought to the themes of "Changing the Family," "Kicking the Domestic Habit," Civilization, Narcissism and Sexual Repression," the book will clearly be a stimulus. And for just that, for further directing attention to the significance of sex role training and the like in the formation of social attitudes, it deserves a good word.

In all of his books and perhaps particularly in *Footholds*, Slater writes quite favorably of the women's movement and its potential to free both sexes from psychologically stultifying sexual roles. Indeed Slater thinks the liberation of women is eesntial to the cure of most of the social miseries so vigorously portrayed in earlier books. In both *Footholds* and *Earthwalk* talk of these things begins with what must be some of the most supportive words in print written by a male on these matters. Slater even readily criticizes male behavior towards women, as in the first chapter of *Footholds* where he suggests for example that "in all civilized societies men have sacrificed a part of their eroticism to the pursuit of wealth, status, and power, and then harassed their womenfolk in a variety of ways to compensate for the feelings of sexual inferiority that this sacrifice engendered" (5).

I know we are supposed to be grateful for stuff like this (and something tells me Slater knows it, too) and we may sound hopelessly intractible if after such gifts we still find things to complain about. But because the picture of womanhood in Slater's book gets dark so rapidly and because so many of the niceties he first serves up are surely (am I too hopeful?) so well established, at least among those who would be reading books like his, as to be ideological giveaways by this time, I tend in retrospect to see this as bait for the hook to come. That hook is Slater's much more thoroughly treated analysis of why men got like this in the first place. For while Slater, like Marcuse, is hopeful about the kind of liberation the women's movement can bring to this masculine state of affairs, he, unlike Marcuse, does not see this so much as the release

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of positive feminine values into a masculine world as the inhibition of feminine destructiveness that, in his version, has been largely responsible for the narcissistic masculine pride that is the making of patriarchy. The same idea is treated in *The Pursuit of Loneliness* (Chapter 3, "Women and Children First") and *Earthwalk* (Chapter 4, "Because She's There or Social Climbing Begins at Home") and each time the emphasis in Slater's support of women's liberation quickly shifts from what women positively have to offer the world to the psychological damage they must be hindered from doing as resentful and even vulturous creatures bent on both exploiting their sons' masculinity (by channeling their own ambitions through it) and denouncing it (keeping them emotionally dependent). The son, helpless, innocent, and apparently with no other clues from the culture as to what his role should be, is at her hand turned into the narcissistic, heedless, and self-aggradizing perpetuator of a wickedly patriarchal (really "matriarchal") culture, which in turn makes for resentful mothers who start the whole business over again.

On one level I think Slater is absolutely right about this. This is undeniably one of the ways women *have* contributed to the perpetuation of masculine culture and their own subordination in it.[4] There are a good many others, by exploiting the magical appeal their femininity has for men who have had to suppress such ways of being within themselves, by holding careful watch over signs in one another of rebelliousness or desire to achieve something outside the confines of the allotted role, by simply giving allegiance to certain masculine projects as their own, and so on. But to make maternal resentment the why and wherewithal of patriarchal culture presumably at least since its second generation is an exaggeration in the extreme.

Slater has been occupied with this thesis for some time and has already written a book (*The Glory of Hera*) attempting to interpret the patriarchy of ancient Greece in terms of it. Chapter 8 of *Footholds*, "The Family in Ancient Greece," is largely a recounting of these ideas. Slater builds his "proof" primarily on the hostile female images in Greek literature and mythology and upon a descriptive scenario of women's low status in that society. The latter is actually offered as evidence for women's lust for vengeance such that every remark about her oppression almost seems to indict her. For example, "The marital relationship thus came to resemble that of an older brother and younger sister, when the brother had been entrusted with his sister's care against his will, and she is longing for her mother and resents his coldness, irritability, and contempt. But in the case of brother and sister, the mother will eventually return, and the sister can even complain of her brother's ill treatment. The wife is alone among strangers and will remain so. As a child, she could perhaps vent her feelings in doll play. As a wife she can only vent them on her children" (77).

As for the image of women in Greek literature, Slater runs fact and fiction together (leaving not much room for interpretation) and nearly takes these as characterizations of real life situations and life with mother, carried off on the anemic justification that "All a playwright requires for drama is a vivid memory for his own childhood and

4. It is even possible to point to an instance of this in a recent book that is billed as feminist literature. The book purports to denounce myths of the power of female influence but in lieu of any real analysis that might accomplish this we get some convincingly vivid descriptions of exactly that power. It comes then as no surprise when the reader closes the book to find on the back cover a large photograph of the author looking mysterious, forbidding and sybil-like with a half-darkened face and hands folded before her—and an "About the Author" blurb that is largely devoted to the successes of her husband and sons!

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family—and this is especially true of Greek drama, which is most intensely concerned with family conflict" (71).

In his "interpretation" of myth Slater uses the same thin psychological thread to make a *direct* link between the mythical female personages and real mother until it gets very easy to read descriptions of the former as images of the latter. For example he writes in a description of "the female bogies—Lamia, Gorgo, Medusa, Mormo and others," "That they should prey on children is intrinsic, but what is important is the sense of deprivation that often attaches itself to them. They have lost their own children, they are devouring and cannabalistic, and, above all, they are sexually ravenous and insatiable. Whatever the origin of these bogies,[5] it seems apparent that at some point they were derived from the male child's fear of the emotional needs of the mother—needs often directed toward himself and in relation to which he felt helpless, inadequate, and frightened" (84).

It is a deftly constructed argument in which the author writes severely of the proclivities of patriarchy, but between every remark apparently critical of masculine behavior there rings a subliminal refrain of the female's culpability.[6] Slater's theory of patriarchal culture basically comes down to this, that "Being less tied to essential maintenance functions, men in some primitive societies had the leisure and uninvolvement to specialize, to invent, to create further leisure for themselves" (*Earthwalk*, 88). This "naturally" led to the subordination of women who resented it, took this out on their sons by dominating them, who in turn retaliated with a woman-hating, woman-fearing culture.

Perhaps the most irritating aspect of this thesis is that it is so assuredly put forward without even a nod to the many other interpretations possible on the basis of the same evidence. There is, for example, the much discussed possibility that all this was not a rational response to literal conditions but grew out of masculine envy of the superiority men may have associated with women's reproductive capacities, and against which they may have felt they had to compete. It's also possible that once started, this could have given rise to some nasty images of female maternal powers, well-enough preserved in the culture at large not to need any direct maternal likenesses to keep the myth alive. And then surely the male gets some impetus towards his male role from the society generally (even if not from the actual father), so that the mother could do nothing destructive and he could still resent the influence her feminine world had on him. So long as the manly ideal of a patriarchal culture forces him to repress even what he might have experienced as the favorable and satisfying aspects of her feminine world, and along with it femininity in himself, it seems quite likely these are going to haunt him in the (irrational) figures of powerful feminine influence. The unconscious, as Freud taught us, doesn't represent the repressed in literal images.

I wonder in fact if it wouldn't be just as reasonable to say that this patriarchal world is as undermothered as overmothered (Erik Erikson, writing about the same American version of motherhood as Slater, calls it "misplaced paternalism;" *Childhood and*

5. Slater is very careful to preface such conclusions with somewhat limiting disclaimers, but he can afford them; the reader has already gotten the image.

6. It is just this sort of thing that makes writing this kind of critical review of Slater's work a frustrating and thankless task; the doublebinding confusion created by this kind of argument is almost impossible to respond to without seeming pickish. How does one show the actual word is not the actual message? This is basically the same problem as trying to deal with Slater's inconsistency: For every idea even lengthily developed in these books one can pretty much count on at least a one line expression of the opposite view on some other page.

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Society, 254), that one reason "motherhood" has produced such distorting effects in the realm of the unconscious is because the values associated with it (positive ones this time) are allowed such limited play, have to be renounced so early, and are not as a rule permitted to be constituents of masculine character (nurturance, tenderness, sensuality, supportive protection) or masculine social and political institutions.[7] In practical terms, to change this would still require that men take an equal hand at home and women in the world. But it would give a different slant to the conception of Women's Liberation since it would mean women too have to give up something positive that men should not be too proud to emulate, no more than are women in their constant emulation of the ways and accomplishments of men. Just as we are being liberated into the man's world, shouldn't men be willing to be liberated into woman's? In a sense this is perhaps what Slater means in his talk of collectivity and connectedness and maybe none of the rest of this matters if it all comes down to the same result. But that is the question. Otherwise a very *patriarchal* liberation of the female role is quite conceivable—and some of those futuristic "bogey-books" might give a strong hint as to what this could be like.

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7. Much of what Slater himself cites to support his thesis is at least equally supportive of these other interpretations. He, for example, relies heavily on a study briefly referred to by David McClelland in *The Achieving Society* in which it was suggested that the absence of the father *combined* with a mother who is not strongly nurturant but "strict and severe in training practices, controlled and moderate in warmth and affection" (405) often leads to the achiever mentality. (The McClelland thesis is that high achievement motivation is "positively affected," entailing demonstrations of "warmth" but the "warmth" it measures is only that offered as reward, that is to say, well-placed—not unconditional—affection.) McClelland thinks the mother's attitude can be decisive in determining the boy's achievement level, but this comes primarily from her encouraging him to be independent of her early on; if we understand the Oedipal period as that period of the renunciation of the mother's world, it is her collusion in this process of—as McClelland puts it—thrusting him "out of the nest" too early (356; see also *The Achievement Motive*). Furthermore, Slater's own assertions about the relation between the mother's ambitions and the son's are far from clearly substantiated by McClelland who also refers to a study of German and Japanese mothers and sons (no such study was available for the U.S.) which showed that the sons' ambition did not significantly increase as a function of the mothers' ambition, though it did *decrease* as the ambitiousness of the mother increased (348-349). And lastly, McClelland has argued that the individual is often responding, not to actual experiences with parents, but to *cultural* ideals; for example: "This somewhat limited case analysis suggests that, while a set of generalized expectations about fathers and mothers or parent-child relationships probably do develop, much as the psychoanalysts claim, they almost certainly do not derive *in any simple fashion* from the actual characteristic of the parents or the child's relationship to the parents. . . . There are many influences which enter into the formation of such generalized conceptions. Social norms and individual motivations are almost certainly of equal importance to direct personal experience" (*Personality*, 308-309, McClelland's emphasis).

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Leonard Krieger, *An Essay on the Theory of Enlightened Despotism*. Chcago: University of Chicago Press, 1975. 91 pages.

Leonard Krieger knows that the past is no guide for the present, that the historian's task is not the edification of the public by means of enlightening examples. Yet, *An Essay on the Theory of Enlightened Despotism* has a contemporary and political aim. Krieger insists that Enlightened Despotism has become "a permanent category, a continual option, and a recurrent choice in our politics" (x). He repeats that "many of us still practice an Enlightened Despotism that we have not the honesty to preach" (90). Even more, he claims that "all modern despots have been, in theory, Enlightened Despots" (91). The book's peculiar final sentence—"Let the voter beware"—only becomes clear once the intermingling of the main claims is untangled.

It might be suggested that the eighteenth-century Enlightened Despotism corresponds to the twentieth-century formations such as the welfare state and socialism. Yet these twentieth-century notions are equally vague, as much a wish as a reality, an ideology as a program. Even when limited to eighteenth-century France, Prussia, Austria and Russia, the concept is open to severe criticism. Were the Enlightened Despots different from the Absolute Monarchs whom they succeeded? How absolute were their regimes? How practical, real, were their reforms? In what sense were these monarchs enlightened? How did their theoretical enlightenment manifest itself? The deeper one enters the period, the more hesitant one becomes in using the term at all.

One could point to 'enlightening' parallels between the choices of the eighteenth century and those of our own bureaucratic scene. The philosophes' critical efforts were offered to the service of the reforming monarchs;[1] the developing physiocratic sciences were put to the disposition of kings modernizing their states while extending their control over greater areas of their subjects' lives; and of the radical ideas of the French Revolution, only the equality of capitalist entrepreneurs was won. In a more positive vein, there is the vast process of enlightenment promised by universal public education coupled with a free press and the cynical skepticism that accompany the turn to inwardness, while the increased social role of the state appears as a recognition of its responsibilities to the citizenry, thus opening new political spaces.

Krieger's lesson, however, is not taught by means of analogy. He is a theorist—with him, historical phenomena spell out their own theory. Where the tasks of politics were evident in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the eighteenth and twentieth witness a crisis of definitions. The seventeenth century could borrow from nature without confronting the uncertainty of history, while the nineteenth used history to dominate the otherness of nature. In both cases, there is no discord between theoretical principle and practical problems; the terms in which the problems are posed are homologous to the theoretical and political armament available for their solution. This was not the case in the eighteenth century. The static theory inherited from the seventeenth-century rationalists increasingly imposed what Krieger calls a "distortion" on a changed reality swimming outside of its nets; and from the inadequacies in the theory that this distortion revealed, there emerged a "deflection" of the theory itself. Either one remained faithful to the general theory, at the cost of

1. Robert Derathé even argues that their goal was to become what C. Wright Mills was to call the "power elite." In Derathé, "Les philosophes et le despotisme," Pierre Francastel, ed., *Utopie et institutions* (Paris, 1963), p. 170.

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distorting the facts; or one stuck to the facts, at the risk of deflecting the purity of the theory.

With the possible exceptions of Montesquieu and Rousseau, eighteenth-century practice and theory was unable to bring together rationalist theory with empirical facts. The French Revolution brought the waverings to a head. From the Terror to the Empire to the Restoration, it gave the nineteenth century a new device for thinking the political: history. Of course, historical awareness had existed previously. Yet it was an externally necessitated and rational history—either a linear material history as in the French case, or an idealistic variant as in Kant, whose "cosmopolitan history" can be seen as symptomatic of the turning point to nineteenth-century thought. The novelty of the nineteenth century was the immanentization of *history as the basis on which the political rests.*[2] This was the theoretical foundation of liberalism and Marxism; the need to deny this foundation led, for the first time, to the explicit formulation of conservative theory.

Although it was perhaps a fulfillment of one of the strands of historical society, the Russian Revolution was the child of a war which destroyed forever the theoretical power of history even more than the Lisbon earthquake destroyed the power of nature. In this sense, the twentieth century is confronted anew with a political reality which the inherited theories are incapable of confronting without distortion and deflection: the theories distort the problems, while the integration of the realities into theory deflects it to the point that both Marxism and liberalism tend toward precisely the kind of *organizational theorizing* at the service of a supposedly universal state-power that emerged in the eighteenth century. Twentieth-century political theory appears to be without a universalizable foundation; hence the talk today of a "crisis of legitimation."

To make sense of these structural generalizations, we have to understand that the *task of the political is to conjure away, to cloak or occlude, the divisions which haunt society, threaten its unity and its ability to conceive of itself as a coherent totality.* The political is thus ambiguous: it aims at closing and covering over, and yet in this very movement it opens the possibility for praxis and for critique. If a politics were to succeed, it would do away with the conditions that made it necessary. The eighteenth century provides a perfect illustration of the formation and functioning of the political in this sense of the term. With the breakdown of the seventeenth century synthesis through nature, and before the advent of history as imminent principle, the eighteenth century was driven to an *active theorization.* The house that theory built was to be continually repaired, renovated, embellished. And as theory's problems were also those of the monarch's practice, the constant interplay was explicit. For this reason too, the theorist found it necessary to combine practice with preaching. "Enlightened Despotism" is therefore not an illicit combination of a theoretical program with a political practice; rather, it points to a specific style of theory-as-praxis.

The revolutionary imagination has been haunted by 1789. The French Revolution posed a double challenge: to explain its possibility, and to account for its incompleteness. The general suggestion, indebted to Marx, is that the absolute monarchy's attempt to assure and consolidate its own position led to the socio-economic development that eventually undermined it. Monarch and young bourgeoisie unite

2. See, for example, Jürgen Habermas's discussion in "Hegel's Critique of the French Revolution," *Theory and Praxis* (Boston, 1971).

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against the feudal remnants and Church interference; the result is the creation of the modern state, either by the French Revolution or in its wake. The development of the standing army as well as centralized taxation measures, brought about changes which, over time, eroded the old superstructure and its legitimations. Eventually, "the integument is burst asunder."

To explain the origins of the French Revolution is also to explain its further development. The revolution eliminated the constraints of the old political order, opening up the field for the egoistic spirit of capitalist venture that had grown within the Ancien Régime. Of the slogans inscribed on its banner, the revolution achieved only a legal equality, which in the end was nothing but the enlightened despots' own goal. Aware that the interests of the state demanded the growth of modern industry, they had encouraged it.[3] But if this is an accurate picture, then the usual explanation of the origins of the revolution is inadequate; at best, the revolution becomes an *ad hoc* reaction, an accident due to the enlightened monarchs' inability to carry through their reforms quickly and efficiently. The revolution is then *nothing new*; quantity does not become quality; the sociology of the same replaces the political thought of the new.

What the Marxists have established is that the initiative for economic development came from the monarchs, intentionally or not. If there is a class struggle between a rising bourgeoisie and a feudal nobility, then the state and the classes in presence are taken simply as economic forces; politics becomes a question of economics, a dependent variable, an accident without inherent significance. While there are good grounds for such an approach, it neglects too much.[4] In France, for example, from the Fronde to the opposition to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, there was a qualitative shift in the perception of the political. The monarch, whom Bossuet had justified as a father, is perceived in different colors. The anonymous author of the Hugenot pamphlet, "Les soupirs de la France esclave," followed by La Bruyère and later Bayle, reintroduce the notion of despotism. When Montesquieu adopts the term, his reference to its oriental form intended to condemn not only the lack of political but also of social freedom. The *Lettres Persanes* is not a critique of the regime of Louis XIV from the standpoint of a rising bourgeoisie demanding economic equality, but in terms of the corruption that interferes with the exercise of *freedom*.

From another perspective, and this time in Prussia, the eighteenth century can be said to have created a different sort of revolution. Henri Brunschwig's recently translated *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia*[5] provides

3. This would account for phenomena like the brochure distributed by the "Enlightened Despot" Joseph II in 1789, entitled "La vérité ou tableau comparatif des changements projetés par l'empereur et des points arrêtés par l'assemblé nationale en France," in which the identity of goals is forcefully asserted. Similar was the reception of the Constitution of 1791 by the Prussian minister, Hertzberg, who pointed out that the citizens of Prussia had no need to envy the advances of the French. Although perhaps somewhat uncritical, these and other such assertions were certainly based on a perceived similarity of goals.

4. See François Furet and Denis Richet, *La Revolution Francaise*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1965-66). For the issues raised by this work, see especially the critique by Claude Mazauric, "Reflexions sur une nouvelle conception de la révolution francaise," in *Annales historiques de la révolution française* (July-September, 1967), pp. 339-368. Richet replies to these criticisms in "Autour des origines idéologiques lointaines de la Révolution française: Elites et despotisme," in *Annales, Economie-Sociétés-Civilisations* (January-February 1969), no. 1, pp. 1-23.

5. The French title was more specific: *La Crise de l'état prussien à la fin du XVIIIE siècle et la génèse de la mentalité romantique* (Paris, 1947). Added to the translation is a separately

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a meticulously detailed picture of the mechanisms by which the philosophy and economic-social aims of the Enlightenment were spread: its educational system, its officialdom, its press and the growing numbers of reading clubs, etc. Already confronted with internal difficulties inherent in this vast social renovation of a 'backward' land, the Enlightenment had also to cope with a series of new problems. With increased prosperity came demographic growth and population shifts; the new middle strata educated by the Enlightenment found a fully staffed civil service and few, or ill-paid, opportunities to exercise the professions they had learned and, finally, with the death of Frederick II, the ascension of Frederick Wilhelm II and his aggressively orthodox Minister Wöllner, who began a systematic fundamentalist attack on the 'radicality' of the Enlightenment. In this context, the young found themselves emotionally and socially separated from society, with no outlets for their energies, enthusiasms and reforming passions. Intellectual romanticism and the popular attitude described by Brunschwig as the 'mentality of the miraculous' were the outcome.

Brunschwig's argument is that the everyday life of the Enlightenment provides the material base for understanding an intellectual movement that cannot be treated in terms of the history of ideas alone. What he does not stress, however, is that the romantic choice was implicitly *political*: a manner of bridging the gaps, unifying the chaotic, conjuring the risk of uncertainty and change. This political dimension is hinted at in the preface to the English translation, where Brunschwig comments on the parallel of his romantics and the "counter-culture" of the 1960s.

Liberty and fraternity come to the fore in the romantic reaction while the concern with social equality appears unimportant or pedantic. Typical is the romantic's attitude toward the French Revolution, which was at first hailed enthusiastically, only to be increasingly criticized with each step to institutionalization, and finally left aside in the renewed quest for the ideal. Brunschwig's discussion of the 'mentality of the miraculous' shows that the romantics were a manifestation of a concrete social problem. Yet their incipient political response went too far toward a purism; the political became a mythical field where illusory battles could be safely fought and glorious victories painlessly won.

The romantic purism that opens toward but escapes from the political questions is part of a process of the delegitimation of the absolutist state. Another aspect of this same process is illustrated in Reinhart Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise*.[6] Koselleck argues that the formation of the absolutist state in the seventeenth century was based on a division between morality and politics that had to be established and consecrated by theory in order to avoid a return to the religious wars. The split between morality and politics, consistently maintained in the theory of a Hobbes or a Locke as well as in the practice of the renewed English monarchy, meant that there could be a private development of a moral theory and practice based on individual judgment. The new morality of individual rational choice and judgment was, in the best sense of the term, bourgeois. By the very fact of its individual and private grounding in the autonomy of the free choice of the rational individual it began to undermine the legitimacy of the

published article, "The Struggle of the Jews for Emancipation in Prussia," which, though intrinsically interesting, has little to do with the book's main argument. English edition: Chicago, 1974.

6. Reinhert Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973). On Koselleck's place in the tradition of the Counter-Enlightenment, see Jürgen Habermas, "Zur Kritik an der Geschichtsphilosophie," *Kultur und Kritik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), pp. 355-364.

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absolute state that had been erected in separation from this sphere, dominating it but leaving it—like religion—to establish its own self-rule.

Aided by economic development as well as by the enlightened critique of all dogma, a political thrust gradually emerged from this moral consciousness that was all the more dangerous to the prevailing order insofar as it did not—it could not!—express itself in a properly political language. Koselleck's detailed analysis of the Free Masons and of social groups such as the Club de l'Entresol which were formed at this time shows how the members were gradually driven from their individual moral stand to take political positions that judged the present as well as the course of history from the perspective of the universalized moral individual. The clash was inevitable: to exist, morality must be universal; and where politics clashes with it, morality must either renounce or undermine the legitimacy of politics. Where Brunschwig's incipient romantics reacted to their situation by transcending it to a beyond, Koselleck's rising bourgeoisie opts for the pole of individual morality and, by universalizing the inner moral court, politicizes morality. Both are political reactions unable to institutionalize a political practice.

Following an economic mercantilism incapable of dealing with the remnants of feudal privilege in the countryside, its educational and administrative reforms limited by resistance, inertia and the very size of the task, eighteenth century monarchs were unable to practice what they preached. Friedrich the Great ostentatiously insisted that he was but the "first servant of the state." Joseph II of Austria abolished the legal obligation to kiss the hand and bend the knee before the monarch on the grounds that all are equal before God. More extreme was the wish of Joseph's brother, Peter Leopold of Tuscany, whose proposed constitution expressly noted that his rule was based on conquest and declared the return to the citizens of their natural freedom in order that they should freely contract to restore their state. As Georges Lefèbvre points out, these may have been simple "jeux d'esprit" and monarchical caprice, since along with the rhetoric about the people's will, each monarch also stressed that the contract had in fact already been constituted (even Peter Leopold never instituted his new constitution). The rhetorical distinction between king and kingdom elaborated by Bodin was accepted by Louis XIV, who never equated himself with the state but, on the contrary, on his deathbed said that "I am going, but the state will remain." But as Goethe, himself in the service of an enlightened Saxon court, pointed out, such self-justifications led, in the end, to "sans-culottisme." In seeking to legitimate themselves morally, the monarchs contributed to their own delegitimation, just as the moral court of the individual conscience had to find political outlet if it were to remain a self-consistent practical effort.

Koselleck's moralists did not bring to fruition the crisis any more than did Brunschwig's romantics. But where the German romantics appear as an expression of the crisis itself, the moralists contributed to its creation as a *political exigency*. Although unconscious of their own political thrust, Koselleck's bourgeois organized lodges and clubs, debated issues along rigorous logical lines from the viewpoint of the sanctity of individual conscience, and in a sense prefigured that liberty, equality and fraternity for which the French Revolution would be made. This absolutizing of the individual accompanied by a consequent rationalism had the paradoxical result of forcing the bourgeois moralists into a particular party in order to institute their universal claims. But this particularization destroyed the universality of the moral stance, for the "law of the heart" can never be rendered universal in a political institution.

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The practical tasks of the monarchs drove them to the inverse of the bourgeois paradox. A new conception of the state began to emerge with the extension of its tasks. The aid of the citizenry was needed and appealed to. The "discovery" of individual happiness and welfare led to the definition of the community as the concordance of individual strivings. Natural law and contract theory underwent distortion and deflection, such that theory found itself based on the individual and yet condemned to work through the monarch. Typical was Kant's reply to the question, "Do we live in an enlightened age?" "No," he answered, "we live in an Age of Enlightenment." And although he defined enlightenment as the individual's "freeing himself from his self-incurred tutelage," Kant offered kudos to his monarch, defining his age as the "century of Frederick."[7] Such theorization was structurally unstable. For example, Fichte's anonymously published populist defense of the French Revolution was so 'Kantian' in its logic as to be attributed to the master himself. Yet what lent radicality to Fichte's claim was its attempt to found not just equality but liberty and fraternity as well. These were the preconditions on which contract thought had to be based even though it was precisely the equality of contract theory that turned the other two principles into formal, empty phrases. The reason for this evolution seems to lie in a neglect of the political sphere, to which Leonard Krieger devotes the central part of his *Essay*.

Krieger argues that "enlightened despotism" does not refer to what the monarchs did, nor even what they said. What justifies the term is its "synthetic function," its ability to express a unity in diversity. The theoretical debates of the eighteenth century lack the coherence of seventeenth century natural rationalism or nineteenth century historical reason—and precisely this is the key to eighteenth century politics: the intellectual problem for the theorist and historian is at the same time a political problem for the era itself.

Krieger takes "enlightened despotism" as a "schema" in the Kantian sense.[8] It is both "sign and symbol... It is allusive to, not representative, of reality" (33). It is to be a mediation between the empirical and the categorical, organizing a manifold of data under unifying concepts. "As schema, it extends to every theoretical and practical situation where there was a recognized and inherent dissonance between the tendencies of the political instruments at hand and the nature of the social goals to be achieved by them and yet where some linkage was nonetheless strung up between instruments and goals" (34).[9] The vague, conceptual nature of this definition is intended to capture the tension constitutive of the political.

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7. Immanuel Kant, *Werke* vol. 8 (Berlin, 1968), p. 40.

8. The choice of this term is more significant than Krieger seems to realize. Though I will return to it in some detail, Krieger's use suggests, first of all, that the category is not an *ad hoc* device; rather, it is constitutive of the task of political theory in general. Second, as creative response, the schematism is the *giver of sense* to the manifold of data. This, too, is a general task of the political. Third, when the modification introduced by the *Critique of Judgment* is taken into account, the suggestion is that this creation of sense is the creation of the *new*, not simply the working out or readjustment of parts already present. On this latter point, of the discussion of genius in Kant, *Werke*, vol. 5, paragraph 49, especially pp. 317-319.

9. Switching his Kantian categories, Krieger later asserts that "Like the state of nature, the social contract and the general will, Enlightened Despotism existed neither as a general political fact that could be indicated nor as a logically necessary philosophical truth that could be demonstrated. Like them, it existed rather as an idea of reason—that is, a conditional principle whose truth stemmed precisely from the hypothetical necessity of assuming it if any sense was to be made of a political existence that was contradictory in itself and of theoretical dualities

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If enlightenment refers to the seating of reason in the individual's critical faculties, then its combination with despotism seems contradictory, or at best a "jeu d'esprit." The individual ought to be left alone to seek happiness according to a self-chosen precept. Of course, the problem is that some enlightened state authority is necessary in cases of conflict. But here 'enlightenment' no longer refers to critical judgment but to a specific kind of knowledge: the knowledge of the natural laws of social intercourse. The existence of conflict indicates that those laws are not functioning. Some state authority must have the power to set them (back) into action. Further, the only way of knowing whether authority has successfully intervened is through the results, measured in terms of 'happiness.' Thus, argues Krieger, there appears a *shift in the locus of the political principle* (38). The justification of authority shifts from the seventeenth century model. "Hypostatized discordance rather than unity" is now fundamental, such that "the management of discord rather than the application of unity [is] the function of political principle" (34). The nature of the political as the conjuring away of social divisions could not be made more explicit.[10] At the same time, politics is thus opened to critique, and its representatives must legitimate themselves.

The management of discord by the creation of institutions safeguarding the individual's welfare and happiness has to take into account the active striving of those same individuals who, though not yet enlightened, are allegedly in the process of becoming enlightened. This paradox gives rise to what Krieger calls the "constitutional increment." "In general," he writes, "when the emphasis was on the *activity* of government, its unconditioned power was brought to the fore; when the emphasis was on the *being* of government, it was defined in terms of its constitutional structure" (68). This entailed a shift in the meaning of constitutional theory from its traditionally descriptive historical character to a normative and prescriptive functioning. The constitution now, literally, constitutes the body politic, and is constituted by it. Such a shift was brought about by three factors: "The political surge of the aristocracy undermined its constitutional position as a conduit of monarchical power; the emphasis on natural rights and individual utility undermined the natural definition of absolute political sovereignty; and the increase in the force available to the instrumentalities of the state dislocated the familiar balance between what was and what was not subject to political power" (74). This change was to lead to our contemporary notion of constitutionalism as opposed to absolutism. The eighteenth century was not yet able to make that move because of the explicit divisions on which it was based, and the lack of an imminent principle permitting their elimination. The nineteenth century would discover such a principle in the imminent historicity of

unbridgeable in themselves" (89). He sees it as speaking in the "conditional mode," expressing "a unifying reality inseparable from the facts of political life but yet existent on a different plane operative at once behind and through them...the expression of a political principle in the special language of political action" (84). It is this peculiar character which justifies treating the arguments of intellectuals as historical data for the establishment of the parameters of political practice.

10. This is the relevance of Furet and Richet's reinterpretation of the French Revolution. When Richet, replying to Mazauric's attack, details the debates among the nobility in the seventeenth century as to who will be considered a peer, he points to a social process that will have political implications insofar as these debates seek to assure homogeneity in the political body and to set up a barrier before the "barbarians" (4). The recognition of otherness and the need to create a political body of free, equal brethren is *constitutive of the political debate* that was "telescoped" into the French Revolution. (See note 4.)

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society. Our own twentieth century position is again blurred; politics remains undefined while being used in an *ad hoc* pragmatic-defensive manner.

Paradoxically, the constitutional limits placed on the monarch in the name of individual liberty increased the absolute power. There was a "shift in the axis of constitutional thinking" (76) as the state assumed social tasks prevoiusly falling outside its sphere. The particular, moral and private realms are thereby generalized, naturalized and rationalized. United in a single political order, social and political life fused. As the supposed expression of natural laws, government became unlimited in scope.[11] Correlatively, there occurred a "shift in the plane of constitutional thinking" whereby the distinction between what is and is not amenable to collective control was abolished, and the justification of the monarch now rested solely in his ability to know and to plan the future. The result was that the constitution served as a weapon for reform, not simply in the abolition of the feudal remnants but also, in Turgot's words, to "shackle men for their happiness" (78).

In this sense, the plans for political participation of the citizenry were based on the paradoxical argument that enlightened citizens were necessary to the monarch's ability to make rational decisions and that the monarch should have the foresight to work for enlightenment in order to strengthen his own power. The functional concern with welfare explicitly posed the state as the *totality and totalizer*, at once setting it apart from the society on which it depended, and yet stressing its dependence. Social divisions required the creation of an absolutist politics. But the latter can only work through the social individuals who, in assuming the political demands, become at once the sharpest critics and the staunchest allies of the state.

This interpretation of constitutionalism points once again to the role of the political in conjuring away the social divisions. The divisions evaporate into the changed axis of the political sphere where they can allegedly be dealt with rationally since the radical opposition of power and individual happiness is now reduced to a common denominator. The changed plane deals with the division by proposing the extension of the political act into the very heart of individual life, once again eliminating the division by finding a common denominator. Enlightenment of the citizen by the state serves this function insofar as the rationality according to which the state operates and the one which it teaches the individual are identical in principle, and the enlightened individuals simply become the agents of the state in the sphere of private life. Both shifts in axis and in plane are necessitated by the hypostatized discord from which the eighteenth century begins. They are made possible by the assimilation of rationality to nature that permits the political sphere to claim as its task the unification of society.

Krieger's analysis goes beyond the conventional historical approaches by focusing on the structure and role of the political in eighteenth century society. He thus breathes life back into the eighteenth century by returning to it the indetermination which is the very possibility of creation that constitutes history. Because he does not explain *away* the complexity of the eighteenth century, his *historical* account is also a *theory* of politics.

Krieger attacks an historical positivism whereby the historian's task is simply to recount facts, to confront facts with theory, and to judge the correspondence or lack thereof. Reality itself is not so fixed, permanent or solid as such a view suggests. For

11. Krieger does not deal with the implications that Koselleck draws from this shift, namely, that government is weakened and undermined by the very move which extends its field of action, for its responsibilities grow beyond its ability to deal with them.

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Krieger, the historian's task is to capture that "conditional mode" of the everyday, to portray "political reality in an active key," as he titles his concluding chapter. History is the search for *sense*, not for flat and naked facts. The criteria of validity concern what Krieger calls "qualitative fidelity" (ix). For this reason, historiography is description that is itself theory: what it describes is the process of the creation of *sense*. To capture the sense of *social* phenomena in flux demands a *political* theory.

Discussing the many pot-shots taken at the notion of enlightened despotism, Krieger insists nonetheless that "it, and only it, faithfully reflects the relations of unity and heterogeneity in eighteenth century life by acknowledging the indefeasible reality of both" (32). Unity *and* heterogeneity: no reduction-qua-explanation is possible *and* no single solution can bridge the gap. Politics strives for synthesis, but only at the cost of destroying the very base on which it rests. This is why, significantly, Krieger's essay does not deal with the eighteenth century as a "prelude" to the French Revolution: his question is "Can the tension be maintained, are unity and heterogeneity possible, and at what cost?"

Krieger wants to develop categories that permit the historian to speak of political reality as actionable, conditional, open. He wants to confront the "problem of composing a language of action from linguistic components designed to communicate knowledge of the existing world" (85). This is why he claims that we need "The restatement of indicative assertions about reality as hypothetical conditions of action in such a way as to recast the real relations between fundamental principle and factual appearance into the practical relation of a fundamental quality of an existing agent who can realize himself only by acting in accordance with it" (84). This would make the whole world into a function of the projected action: "the definite subject becomes an open-ended agent and principles of reality become practical postulates" (85). Such an approach, Krieger thinks, accounts for the contradictory positions of the proponents of enlightened despotism: expressing reality, bound to it, and yet at the same time recognizing that individually they are incapable of acting to change it. This is why they were forced to develop a rhetoric based on contradiction.

If we substitute the language of Marxism for Krieger's indefinite referent, we have neither changed the sense of the theoretical argument *nor gained anything*. Political theory becomes exhortation, moralizing; in its historicized nineteenth century version, it becomes the liberal belief in the progress of the species or the idealistic construction of the proletariat as subject-object capable of realizing philosophy and ending (pre)-history. Of course, seeing social reality as conditional and open-ended is a necessary condition for political thought. But political thought needs to understand its own origins and limitations. Krieger's political warning is caution: beware of the lure of the easy solution that abdicates to an "enlightened despot." But this is too cautious.

The shifts of constitutional thinking that Krieger presents point to the modern state's tendency to become total and, ultimately, totalitarian. Immanently historical, classical nineteenth century liberalism never brought this tendency to fruition. That remained the task of twentieth century bureaucratic society, which is the outgrowth of that liberalism. We know that the eighteenth century German romantic solution finally turned backward, to a religious obscurantism and a metaphysics of nature; and that the absolutization of morality into a political principle found its logical conclusion in the Terror of the French Revolution. Krieger's point, therefore, is not to cast doubt on the promises, power or enlightenment of the despot, but to appreciate the *logic of the political*: its paradoxes, risks, and the conditions of its functioning.

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Specifically, we learn the danger of the *mirage of totality*; we become aware of the conflation of the social and the political as the spectre that haunts political practice and its theory. If the political is the attempt to bridge social divisions, then the eighteenth century points out that only when that dualism is consciously recognized is recourse to enlightened despotism possible, for only then is it possible to imagine that one could and must achieve the ultimate reconciliation by absolutizing one or the other pole. At the same time, however, only in this situation does the recourse to *democracy* take on its full political sense.

Krieger is correct in claiming that the distortion and deflection of eighteenth century theory and practice result from the "hypostatization of incoherence." In the intervening period, the nineteenth century's immanent history and the rationality of science reconstituted a coherence. Today, the discrete entities whose juxtaposition comprises our world appear rational (or rationalizable) while theorists limit themselves to the 'middle range' and politicians limit themselves to the pragmatic. In this situation, the task of political totalization and neutralization appears to be—*nothing*: to keep out of the way, reducing political problems to technical questions. The political is "socialized," and thereby opened to the control of the technocrats who dare not call themselves by their political names. Conflict can be openly admitted and displayed. Indeed, it must be, in order that it be further fragmented and particularized into interest groupings, none of which is sufficiently coherent to pose a threat to the still-capitalist private exercise of power. Thus, the task of politics is to disarticulate conflicts by driving them to articulate themselves: an *ad hoc* solution, which makes the conflict still more dangerous and explosive because of the lack of unity. At the same time, it makes demands for a democratic participation imply more than formal equality: liberty and fraternity are also at stake.

Krieger's "reality in an active key" seems to speak the Marxist language, but without any guarantee of success. Indeed, Krieger's disinterest in the economic—like that of the eighteenth century—is striking, and may account for his neglect of the democratic component. Yet the Marxist position reduces and sociologizes the political, returns to the society of equality without the freedom and fraternity which are the concrete *sense* that gives society its unity. Worse, given the infrastructural guarantee, the Marxists must become "little Lenins" taking on their shoulders the weight of history, the "political" task of resolving the contradictions as executors of the judgment of rationality and-or history. The result can only be that the Marxists themselves become "enlightened despots."

It now becomes clear that the political has a further task: *to put an end to history as the creation of the new.* This is easily seen in seventeenth century political theory as it emerged from the religious wars; or again in the nineteenth century, when Marx could explicitly borrow from bourgeois historians, admitting to Wedemeyer that his position was but a consistent development of their insights. The eighteenth century aimed at the same goal, but was condemned to the distortion and deflection. It is no doubt this common goal that explains why the enlightened theorists of the eighteenth century, for all their radicality, were generally reformers *unable* even to conceive of revolution.

The political tasks of the twentieth century can be reformulated in this light. Its specificity is in the attempt to conjure the social divisions by displaying them openly, eliminating the political as a common practical problem by breaking it down into

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technically manageable proportions.[12] By accentuating the divisions and opening them for all to see, the threat of revolution as the creation of the new is eliminated. For if the contradictions are present, public and freely debated, then nothing new could appear. This is how the famous ability of the system to co-opt protest functions. Otherness is integrated into the context of a social pluralism organized around divisions that, displayed and discussed, take on the connotation of a naturalness and even rational inevitability. This is, or pretends to be, an a-political age.

Krieger's politics of caution remain too much in a nineteenth century mode of reason. He defines his problem further, suggesting that "In addition to the way this world looks when it is contemplated and the way this world looks to one who is preparing to act upon it, there is the most common perspective of all: the way political reality looks when we perceive it to be actionable—by somebody else. Small wonder that we have patented the eighteenth century invention of enlightened despotism" (90). The argument rings true; and we have certainly had our "despots" claiming to be enlightened. Yet the political here is transformed into the exercise of domination. Sheer domination and exploitation still exist even in our theoretically egalitarian society; yet to conceive the political in only these terms is to eliminate the other two components of 1789: liberty and fraternity.

Two directions emerge here. The first would follow the lead of Ernst Bloch, seeking out those manifestations of the "principle of hope" that refuse to be integrated, levelled or institutionalized. One could suggest an approach to this unfulfilled debt which would seek to understand the specificity of an historical juncture by the mode it chooses to eliminate the threat of this otherness. The analysis would be made sociologically more adequate if, following the insight from the unrealized tasks of 1789, the dimensions of liberty and fraternity were integrated here along the lines of Habermas's emancipatory and hermeneutic or interactive "interests." In this way, the achievements of the Marxian analysis of the eighteenth century could be integrated into the political theory toward which Krieger's work points.

A second approach has already been hinted at by Krieger's decision not to treat the eighteenth century simply as a prelude to the French Revolution. The task would be to analyze concretely the conditions of the possibility of a democratic political form as that one vehicle which would permit the articulation of a political sphere while preserving the rights of the social domain as well. Here again, Habermas offers interesting suggestions, first of all in *Strukturwandel der Oeffentlichkeit* (1962) which analyzes the formation—and later decline—of a "bourgeois public" that is at once socially rooted and politically effective. Here, as well as in a short review written in 1960, Habermas takes a counterposition to Koselleck's *Kritik und Krise,* which throws further light on the problems opened by Krieger's theory of the political.

The theme of a political revolution that institutes the realm of freedom as opposed to a social revolution that solves social conflicts through the constitution of equality is forcefully elaborated in Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution.* Democracy is said to be a *political* form of life, whose extension to the *social sphere* only exacerbates conflict. Habermas points out that this division has historically been part of the armament of the Counter-Enlightenment from Burke to Gehlen. Repression in social life cannot help but impede the formation of the independent political will, which democracy

12. The analysis of the contemporary social structure, as well as the notion of the political on which I rely here, is indebted to the work of Claude Lefort and Cornelius Castoriadis.

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presupposes. This is why, after proposing democracy as a solution to the antinomies he demonstrates in Hegel's theory of the state, Marx went further in "On the Jewish Question" to suggest that the revolution must reform civil society. Yet the present considerations of enlightened despotism have pointed out that a purely social analysis is not sufficient either.

Krieger's admonition that the voter must beware carries a double implication: beware of thinking that a purely political resolution of the tensions of society can be achieved; but beware also of the option for a purely social solution. Habermas's review of Arendt's *On Revolution*[13] points to her recognition that from the *sociétés populaires* of the French Revolution to the sections of 1871, the Soviets of 1905 and 1917, and the Räte of 1919 and 1956, there have indeed been popular attempts to institutionalize a revolutionary democracy. But Arendt never thematizes these attempts and their popular basis. Nor have the Marxists done so. Nor, of course, will I pretend here to do more than refer to the provocative attempt of Claude Lefort's analysis of 1956 in Hungary,[14] and to suggest, in conclusion, that this drive toward a theory of democracy as institutionalizing (but not eliminating) the tension that Krieger's analysis of enlightened despotism brings out so clearly is the central problematic around which the diverse strands of Habermas's reformulation of critical theory turns.

Dick Howard

13. "Die Geschichte von zwei Revolutionen" (1966), *Kultur und Kritik, op.cit.*, pp. 365-370.
14. Claude Lefort, "The Age of Novelty," *Telos*, 29 (Fall 1976), pp. 23-38.

J. Kosta, *Sozialistische Planwirtschaft*. Oplanden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1975. 247 pages.*

1. J. Kosta's book on the transition to socialism represents an excellent illustration of the value, drama and limits of everyone from the left who tries to come out of the Stalinist experience in Eastern Europe. It is a book confronting great theoretical problems in the light of the concrete Eastern-European experience—particularly the Prague spring. Within this collective experience there is also a personal one—the author is an old communist militant who has known Hitler's and Stalin's concentration camps. The meaning of this work is difficult to sum up becuase of the extreme wealth of data and truths it contains, and in spite of the linear clarity with which they are presented. To schematize, it can be said that Kosta starts by proposing that Stalinist planning of an ultracentralized type can thrive only in a backward country where the options are maximally simplified; but the growth of structural complexity—through economic development itself—reveals the impossibility of planning everything centrally so that it seems necessary to fall back on individual businesses for the decentralization of power to make economic choices. This explains the 1960s "mercantile" reforms in the USSR and in other East-European countries.

In the second chapter, Kosta seeks to identify the structural roots for the persistence (even during a phase of transition to socialism) of mercantile categories which, by their nature, impose a consistent economic decentralization. Stalin's and Guevara's interpretations are thus analyzed and rejected (pp. 88-94; 106ff). According to Kosta, they are both guilty of idealism by favoring superstructural factors (form of property

*Translated by Eleni Mahaira-Odoni.

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for Stalin, consciousness for Guevara), in order to explain a phenomenon that pertains to structure. Here Kosta takes up Mandel's and Bettelheim's analyses and locates the real causes in the diverse levels of socialization of production that determine the unequal, contradictory character of production and property (and of its forms). The large trust signifies high levels of socialization and can be readily collectivized, unlike the small peasant holding (assuming that we want to avoid the tragic distortions of the Stalinist agrarian collectivization). Thus, a relation emerges between two different forms of property (whose base involves a structural phenomenon, something that Stalin does not adequately bring out), namely, the large socialized enterprise and the small, private peasant property. Between these very different entities, the economic relation can only be one of exchange insofar as exchange presupposes two largely independent entities not yet brought to unity. Secondly, the persistence of a lack of consumer goods in relation to needs (representing an extended historical phase), makes it necessary to distribute such goods on the basis of an exchange made through the mediation of prices; thus, mercantile categories such as exchange and price re-emerge (pp. 94-98; 101-106). Finally, the heavy and tiring character of the work (itself destined to last for an entire historical phase), inserts the elements of exchange in the relation of labor as well: one still works to obtain some reward (perhaps not just for that, but certainly for that, too, and in no small measure). Physically demanding jobs, as well as jobs that are tedious or require long preparation, make it necessary to use material incentives. Reward, exchange, money are still mercantile categories (pp. 98-101), and a necessary evil to be gradually overcome by eliminating the structural bases for their existence and by avoiding Guevara-type idealistic distortions. In other words, Kosta's position is quite different from that of Yugoslav socialist theorists (Vasilev, Korav, Tanko) who—as in the debate on 1930s socialism—equate socialist planning with the perfect functioning of the market.

In the third chapter, Kosta analyzes three attempts at reform during the 1960s and 1970s in East German, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. His conclusions about these experiments range from (1) perplexing regarding the limited reforms in East Germany; to (2) positive with respect to Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the 1966-68 period; and (3) less positive with respect to the "stabilization" phase following the Warsaw pact invasion. Yet, even in its more positive moments, this conclusion does not overlook the "gray" areas characteristic of eastern economies. Moreover, it is stressed that this is only a partial judgment on economic results because the socio-political results (democratization of society, end of elitist monopoly on economic options) are almost non-existent; the brief experiment in Prague was aborted while in other countries the elite's monopoly over economic options survives under new forms.

The fourth chapter touches on a point of particular emotional significance for Kosta—the Prague Spring. The reforms, claims Kosta, were not aimed at restoring capitalism since they did not question the social character of production and also prohibited individual appropriation of profits (pp. 175-176; 180). Besides, a lively debate on self-management was already evolving and, after some initial indifference on the workers' part, it succeeded in involving the working class itself (from May 1968), and was leading to a real workers' democracy. The last chapter concerns precisely the question of workers' democracy, i.e., self-management. Kosta contrasts the Yugoslav model with that of the Prague Spring, pointing to the partial and limited character of both. The limitation lies in the fact that, according to Kosta, self-management must be a socially global fact, in the sense that it is not enough to participate in micro-economic choices (at the individual enterprise level) but it is necessary

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instead to participate in important macro-economic and macro-social choices. The lacuna lies here in the great limitations of the two models whose comparison, it is argued, suggests that in either case a real and complete workers' democracy was not brought about. However, Kosta also claims that this attempt could have been completed with greater success in Czechoslovakia—a country economically more advanced than Yugoslavia—because socialism presupposes a significant degree of productive development (a thesis made clear at the beginning of the book).

2. So much for Kosta's book, which cannot be accepted without a series of fundamental criticisms. The first important weakness of this work is its inadequate class analysis of eastern bloc countries, particularly of the two main models found there—the USSR and Yugoslavia. About the USSR it is said that, though that country has a structure dominated by a privileged elite, it does not present particular class features and, in any case, it is still a society in transition which has realized some elements of socialism. But surely, these few lines about the USSR (p. 12) are not even a sketch for an analysis, they are only a very schematic and approximate reworking of Trotsky's old and long-outdated theses![1] Consequently, Kosta speaks of Stalinist *Herrschaft* which supposedly survives in the east (pp. 187; 213-214), but, in the absence of a class analysis of this *Herrschaft,* it becomes impossible to clarify its social content.

Kosta's opinion about Yugoslavia is ambivalent and contradictory: he does not deny the limits of Yugoslav self-management and he also stresses how it was constructed and imposed from above (pp. 202-203), which doesn't sound too good (workers' democracy is not a gift); likewise, he admits to the increasing weight of technical personnel among the organs of self-management (pp. 204-205) and to the excessive importance attributed to profit and economic management (pp. 210ff). On the whole, however, Kosta's opinion of Yugoslavia is positive: in no other country do workers count as much as there (p. 204) and, in the last analysis, Yugoslavia alone seems to have produced a durable self-management system, however partial or non-global, i.e., limited to the enterprise level (p. 124).

This is a complete underestimation of the real way in which the Yugoslav economy works in a country with one million emigrants, one million underemployed and 500,000 to 600,000 unemployed at the end of the 1960s and where the state does not count in the least: relying on the data of an inquiry made in 1966, just after the great reform, the state controlled only 15.7 per cent of investments, while only 5 per cent of enterprises were orienting themselves in accordance with the social plan. This is a country where salaries and the allocation of manpower is determined by market laws—by the admission of Yugoslav theorists themselves; where enterprises compete among themselves in the interest of profit; where the profit principle determines the country's distribution of wealth in a manner similar to that of capitalist countries (capital flows toward rich zones, thus promoting the growth of territorial disequilibria and emigration), and where prices are boosted in the name of profit.[2] An economy like this is the negation of socialism and makes for an exact copy of capitalist

1. For a critique of Trotsky, cf. A. Carlo, "The Socio-economic Nature of the USSR," in *Telos,* No. 21, p. 6ff. These theses, however, had already been criticized in the thirities by Rizzi and in the forties by Lefort.

2. For greater documentation of the capitalist functioning of the Yugoslav economy, see A. Carlo, *La Natura Sociale dell' URSS,* (Milano, 1975), p. 164ff. Recently, in reviewing this volume (whose English translation in *Telos* n. 21 does not include the section on Yugoslavia), Ivo Banac observes (in *The Russian Review,* n. 1, 1977, pp. 94-5) that my work on Yugoslavia is

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dynamics; when the labor force is reduced to a commodity, there is no self-management whatsoever. Self-management is for people, not for commodities: if capital relocates to Croatia or Slovenia because of higher returns on profit, the Serbian or Macedonian workers from backward areas can only emigrate—if they are lucky, to Croatia or Slovenia; if there is no work for them there, then to Germany. It is difficult to see how self-management comes into this shamelessly mercantile dynamic.

The only difference between Yugoslavia and other capitalist countries lies in the fact that in Yugoslavia the hereditary right over instruments of production of a "social" character has not been reinstated. But it should be made clear that this hereditary right concerns the transfer of property (superstructure), not the relations of production, which function in a capitalist way. In other words, the Yugoslav manager is the real property owner of his firm, except that its transference occurs in a bureaucratic fashion, i.e., through office-holding rather than hereditary right, even though the tendency to broaden the hereditability of goods has become evident in recent years. As for self-management, we can easily say that it counts for nothing: there have been cases where managers have locked workers in factories in order to force them to participate in self-management assemblies. Even zealous Yugoslavs point out how the manager decides everything except council elections (which formally grant to workers the majority). As Kardelt said in an interview with *Autogestion*, the workers could delegate the choices to those most capable and best educated, but the truth is that the predominance of intellectual over manual labor re-emerges here (this is typical not only of capitalism but of all class societies). With it also resurfaces the usual ideological justification: those who dominate and decide do so because they are the most capable, not because they have power. In reality, instead, when workers are reduced to commodities they become objects of market forces and, therefore, self-management cannot exist except as a facade. In effect, whenever there is a crisis it becomes necessary to settle the accounts of the business operating with the logic of profit and, in such cases, the solution is simple—fire workers and increase exploitation of those remaining in the factory. Faced with the alternative of the factory's bankruptcy or its closing down, the "free," self-managed worker cannot but ratify the choices made by a manager who incarnates objective exigencies: the law of the market. The data provided above on the phenomenon of unemployment, under-employment and emigration in Yugoslavia express statistically precisely this kind of reality.

This inadequate analysis of East European class societies indicates a fundamental weakness in Kosta's work—namely, the illusion that eastern systems could be reformed from the inside by using state and party structures rather than by being overturned through a socialist revolution. This is the only way to explain, for example, his positive opinion on the 1960s reform process and the sympathy he shows toward the Hungarian experience. In fact, a class analysis of these countries would demonstrate that their transformation in a socialist sense cannot come about from the inside, even with

superficial in that it is poorly informed (in contrast to my work on the USSR which he seems to like). In effect, the level of information is not inferior to that of the work on the USSR and it cites (with authoritative references) mountains of facts about the functioning of the economy about which Mr. Banac avoids inconvenient confrontations. He limits himself to pointing out that I am not familiar with the writings of a couple of studious Yugoslavs. There are perhaps many other things I do not know, but I do analyze the Yugoslav structure and I am not reviewing the books of Branco Horvat. The problem then is simple: do the facts that I quote show a capitalist dynamic in the Yugoslav system (which did not change even after the 1974 constitution), or not? On this Mr. Banac remains silent.

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far-reaching reforms, for they stand in a relation of relative continuity (not rupture) *vis-à-vis* the institutions of the state and the party. This is because the nature of this apparatus is not neutral (hence, not usable toward various class goals) but rather class-bound, i.e., oriented to the realization of the goals of the dominant class and of those alone. Kosta makes an error typical of western reformists in confronting the representative structure of the democratic-bourgeois state, which is to claim that this structure can be used for a process of socialist transition, as if it were neutral and equally usable by both proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Is, then, the positive opinion Kosta gives on East European reforms correct? His conclusion concerning East Germany is not enthusiastic and this also agrees largely with the accounts of East Germany's evaluators who go beyond the journalistic proclamations on the East German economic miracle. It is recognized that the standard of living (consumer goods), labor productivity, the level of technology and competitiveness with the West are clearly inferior to the average capitalist country, while the problems of the planning mechanism (flexibility and adaptability of the system) remain unchanged.[3] Thus, reform is far from having solved the deep-seated problems of the East German economy. In Hungary, things went better at first although the rates of development did not change greatly (on p. 134 Kosta indicates a 5.9 per cent development tax on the national product during the reform period as against a previous tax of 5.2 per cent). In 1976, all the old difficulties cropped up again to the point that, despite a 1977 pick up, Hungarian directors were not sure that they could realize the current plan by spring 1977. Now this is not a contextual problem, for in the Hungarian economy there are enormous problems with unresolved aspects of the economy's operation that generate situations of absurd irrationality. On this subject, José Barreto writes: "As for salaries, up to a certain point the reform permitted a major differentiation on the basis of workers' income. However, state control over enterprise wage levels (imposition of a ceiling per capita salary) continued in many cases to prevent an effective differentiation. Many firms seek to escape the effects of this rigorous control by hiring an unskilled (badly paid) labor force, not to put it to work but in order to allow, through lower salaries, a better renumeration for other workers. However negative from the social viewpoint, this phenomenon is actually presented as one of the main causes for the general lack of manpower, which would otherwise be basically fictitious. On the other hand and by virtue of a total distortion of the law of value, the businesses that function with greater productivity do not know to whom they should offer the best salaries, a fact that impedes the healthy channeling of disposable manpower toward the more dynamic and lucrative sectors. Many businesses are unable to attract manpower, despite the fact that they operate with relatively high indices of productivity.

Moreover, there is no leeway given the business directors in the area of salaries: the maximum salary level that a business can afford is equal to or less to the minimum salary level that could either attract a labor force or allow for "a stimulating differentiation."[4]

This is clearly an economy which has fallen far short of reaching an appreciable degree of order and, above all, of equilibrium between the principles of bureaucratic planning and of the market. This failure generates the previously indicated absurd and highly disturbing situations.

3. On this, see K. Sontheimer, W. Bleek, *La République démocratique allemande*, (Paris, 1975), pp. 163-5.

4. Cf. J. Barreto, "Gestao économica e poder operraio na Hungria," in *Analise Social*, n. 45, 1976, p. 81.

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In Czechoslovakia, the 1966-68 upward trend seems significant only because it came after a period of stagnation and serious crises. Actually, in a country with a high level of industrial development, in a post-crisis phase of recuperation and reactivation, the occurence of some development taxes is hardly exceptional given a 7.2 per cent increase in the national product from 1966-1968. Note, however, that the point here is not to make a vulgar statistical evaluation—socialism is not about an extra ton of steel but, above all, about workers' democracy. Given that East Germany, Hungary and "normalized" Czechoslovakia are not exalting examples, as Kosta also stresses, it remains to be seen whether the Yugoslav road, i.e., the restoration of capitalism on the basis of a radical crisis of the bureaucratic collectivist system, did or did not move in the direction of workers' democracy during the Prague Spring. Kosta rejects this hypothesis, emphasizing that the principle of private appropriation was never accepted by the reformers. This is undoubtedly true, but we saw that in Yugoslavia, too, there was no explicit private appropriation and that the economy functioned substantially in a capitalist fashion. In the end, the difference concerns only hereditary rights, i.e., the particular mode of transferring wealth—in other words, it concerns the superstructure and not the structure. (This is not surprising since the completion of a capitalist society at the superstructural level often takes an entire historical epoch.)

Having clarified this, it seems that the dominant ideas in the Prague Spring (those being translated into reforms) were of a decidedly Yugoslav type. Selucky, one of the reformers, wrote: "It is no accident that the entire history of humanity until today shows the economic base of civil society to be the market economy—a mode of economic organization that excludes the violent, i.e., anti-economic constraining of men to labor and productivity and that makes it impossible for the bases of human relations to become the hierarchical relation in the framework of the entire state. As soon as the market mechanism is weakened or liquidated and economic life is invaded by subjectivism, administrative methods, bureaucratic maneuvering and authoritarian decision processes, the market as a disinterested criterion of measurement must be replaced by artificially established indices."[5]

The market is not seen as a dangerous reality or as one to be overcome, in contrast to Kosta's claims; here the market economy is presented as the instrument of efficiency and economic rationality par excellence, while the relations of production, property and classes that a market economy implies are ignored—especially capitalist economy, the most developed and typical of all. The market is "disinterested" (sic) and excludes the violent, anti-economic imperative to labor; evidently, emigration and unemployment as found in capitalism or in the Yugoslav "market socialism" are neither violent nor restrictive for Selucky.

This idealization of the market seen as neutral with respect to class relations is certainly not an isolated case: Ota Sik himself holds similar positions though with less mercantile ingenuity than Selucky.

Sik writes: "What are socialist market relations? Their external form is the exchange of use values by means of relatively liberal decisions and an equal position between seller and buyer. That means that neither the one nor the other is obliged by law but only by economic motives to sell or buy. What is the essence of these relations? It is the exchange of use values by definite relations (by means of money, i.e., by

5. See R. Selucky, "L'Economia Cecoslovacca tra Ieri e Domani," in *Prague 1968* (Bari, 1968), pp. 253-254.

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means of prices) where value will prevail as the general basis for the relations of exchange..."[6]

We have here a situation where the relation between enterprise and market in Sik's idea of socialism is the same as that under capitalism. The enterprise is not subordinated to binding planning choices: independence from the law means independence from collectively binding political choices and from centrally determined objectives. The enterprise operates on the basis of exchange and market relations that will be interpreted as a criterion dominant over value. In an advanced industrial society, this can be nothing else than the necessity of increasing production and the net income (profit) produced by the business. At this point we find ourselves in the midst of the Yugoslav mechanism or, if one prefers, in the midst of capitalism. Hereditary right is absent, but could come later; there is a plan but, given its premises, it can only be advisory, just as happens in self-respecting western representative democracies where plans are made on the spot but where the market is really what decides.

Starting from Sik's logic, which has dominated the new course, it is no longer possible to establish centralized social goals, as Kosta also predicts (pp. 47-48, 56, 59-60, 72), since the enterprise must be independent from the law (i.e., from compulsory planning) and thus must only depend on the market. Socialism ends up by coinciding with a fully realized market economy: the autonomous entities operating in and obeying the laws of the market should realize social goals on the basis of their reciprocal action as inspired by value (profit). There is a definite affinity between Sik's ideology (or that of Lieberman, Tanko, Korac, etc.) and that at the dawn of capitalism when Adam Smith really believed that the common good could be automatically derived from the competition of self-interests on the market. For Sik, too, the search for value on the part of autonomous and independent enterprises involves the realization of an ideal social equilibrium. On this question, Sik also writes that market relations make it possible to overcome contradictions between assigned labor and social needs, as well as help in guaranteeing that the work of the enterprise is socially necessary. In the west today, Milton Friedman is the only one to support this type of liberalism in the presence of crises where the market has literally gone mad.

Given these questions, the danger of a turn in a capitalist direction was quite real and not merely an invention of the neo-Stalinist regimes or of western New Left intellectuals. (However, it is worth noting that the rejection of the dominant ideas of the New Course does not imply the legitimation of the Soviet invasion, both because the Soviets were not intervening to defend socialism but their own power interests, and because only the country's internal class struggle could decide the future choices of Czechoslovakia.)

Our thesis is confirmed by the analysis of the debate on self-management during the Prague Spring in which the working class intervened very late—only in May 1968. What were the results of that debate? Pierre Chauvey, a French student of self-management, observes that the experiments made in the 1968-69 Dubcek period did not attack the distinct and alienated character of managerial direction with respect to the organs of a workers' democracy—a fact that condemned the experiment, together with the Yugoslav one, to being just an imitation of western attempts at co-management.[7] In other words, if the so-called entrepreneurial powers belong insti-

6. See, Ota Sik, *Piano e Mercato nel Socialismo*, (Rome, 1969), p. 249.

7. Cf. D. Chauvey, *L'Autogestione, un'Utopia?* (Rome, 1973), pp. 55, 30ff. for ample documentation on the Czech and Yugoslav experiments.

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tutionally to the manager and the workers have only powers of control—veto, ratification, etc.—everything is reduced to a recycling of western delegated democracy in which the delegation is formally revocable, but in which those delegated end up holding the real institutional power in their hands. Workers can only theoretically change the managers but, organically, entrepreneurial duties belong to the social group of directors who, as distinct from workers, operate according to the law of the market. Just as the peoples of western democracies elect their leaders, the elected workers should have to elect their own leaders. However, electing a leader is only an illusion of democracy. Besides, the above considerations concerning self-management in Yugoslavia (the inspiration for the Czech case) are still valid: when the labor force is reduced to a commodity, it cannot function as the subject of self-management.

This is also shown by the results of an inquiry on workers' council elections (Kosta, pp. 200-201), where it is shown that 75 per cent of positions went to white collar technicians and only 25 per cent to workers. In Yugoslavia, percentages are more favorable to workers but there also, the manager ends up (with the help of market laws) completely dominating the situation. In Czechoslovakia, the situation is even clearer because, from the very beginning, the workers are a negligible minority inside the council. Why is this? According to Kosta and Kovanda,[8] they wanted to choose the most competent person. This justification is the same as Kardely's for explaining the preponderance of technicians in Yugoslav councils (a preponderance of fact rather than number): the technician has a pre-eminent position because he is more knowledgeable and more capable. The concept of meritocracy, typical of capitalism, has emerged here again. As already mentioned, these are untenable positions because self-management is a political fact of political power and consciousness, not a fact of "technical" cognition. If an enterprise must choose what type of goods to produce to respond to social needs, this is a political, not a technical, choice. Technical competence (e.g., choosing what type of installation is proper, the time and mode of doing it, etc.) comes later, at the service of the political choice. Therefore, the meaning of this electoral result is clear: the working class signals that this type of self-management is made for technocracy and thus votes for the technocrats. Perhaps this does not happen as an expression of refusal and maybe the working class believes that this type of self-management could lead to workers' democracy. But the fact is that at the moment of elections, the workers, though forming a majority, end up choosing their leaders from among a minority who include privileged workers. This means that, even if the workers were not aware of it, this type of self-management leaves them out. In other words, the election results did not tend toward surpassing the dichotomy between intellectual and manual labor but, instead, reaffirmed the sway of the former over the latter. This is significant in the framework of class analysis. Moreover, Kosta 199-200). Electoral results fully confirm this expectation: the technicians had won management because they saw it as a means to consolidate their own power (pp. 199-600). Electoral results fully confirm this expectation: the technicians had won earlier, much faster and more decisively than in Yugoslavia.

3. These are not the only possible objections against Kosta. There are matters of detail that I do not want to raise now, preferring to focus on a fundamental theoretical point, i.e., on the discussion of the overcoming of mercantile categories. On this point, Kosta raises the discussion but doesn't follow it through: for, though we may agree that mercantile categories are a necessary evil to be gradually surpassed, the question

8. Karel Kovenda, "Czechoslovak Workers' Councils (1963-1968)," in *Telos*, n. 28 (Summer 1976), pp. 36-54.

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remains as to how this is to be done. In Kosta's account, there is only a vague allusion to a new type of "competitive solidarity" that should have developed in socialist enterprises (p. 50). The discussion on mercantile categories should be resumed in an historical way, for no such categories are eternal or abstract from class relations (à la Selucky). Mercantile categories change in dynamic and content according to the society they exist and the dominant classes therein. The great Polish historian Witold Kula notes that, under feudalism, when prices increased, production destined for the market stagnated, while it increased when prices dropped. The dynamics of production and exchange are radically different from those under capitalism; we are not interested here in establishing the reasons for this, but it should be clear enough that these dynamics are tied, according to Kula, to the interests of the dominant class. Hence, abstract mercantile categories do not exist—only categories that are feudal, capitalist, socialist, etc., each of which has its own content and dynamics irreducible to others. This kind of discourse is absent from Czech or Yugoslav or Russian reformists. They make such categories eternal, separating them from history and classes, and finally propposing the transplanting of specific capitalist mercantile categories into their own countries. This is not the position of Kosta, who well understands the market's character, which is not at all "neutral." But to the extent that Kosta does not develop the discussion toward a necessary transformation of mercantile categories under socialism and instead emphasizes only their necessity, Kosta's position emerges as actually inferior to that of Sik or Selucky.

It has been noted that we cannot do without material incentives. This is all very well. But it is necessary to link the possibility of production premium payment only to the output of a single firm, as is commonly done in East European countries? Not completely, because we can imagine a fund of national incentives supported by production premiums from businesses. This fund, which should integrate business premiums in order to replace them gradually as a second step, would be distributed only when the annual plan has been implemented at the national level. In this case, exchange (i.e., the lending of money against the lending of particularly committed labor) remains. However, this exchange is linked to the dynamics of an economy of socialist planning that must realize global ends—something that does not occur in any market society where productive entities pursue only their own goals. Instead, in this case egoism and exchange are called upon in order to integrate enterprises in the plan and in its global ends. The business collective gets accustomed to reasoning with a global perspective and, if the business plan is realized through means that are harmful to the economy as a whole, the national plan might not materialize and, therefore, the business collective would lose the second type of incentive. For this reason, the business must cooperate in the realization of the national objective. Thus, one departs from self-interest, exchange and the market in order to affirm a mentality that is a negation —the surpassing of the market. This mentality springs from a new organization of the economy that utilizes certain elements of the market by modifying them radically. In this way, the new consciousness is founded materialistically and we avoid idealistic leaps forward à la Guevara, who wanted to change consciousness first and the structure afterward (i.e., to found a structural change on a change of ideas, typical of idealism).

Another example: In the world capitalist system, there is a unequal exchange between industry and agriculture, leading to the latter's underdevelopment. In a socialist system this system of robbery and impoverishment of the peasants must end. However, given the diverse levels of socialization of production, there must be a

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relation of exchange between industry and agriculture, otherwise we fall into the dangers of forced collectivization. Therefore exchange, i.e., a mercantile element, is necessary—but what kind of exchange? It seems evident that a socialist state must have an interest in developing agriculture and, through it, exchange; by fitting within the goals of a planned economy, the socialist state must aim at the realization of a balanced industry-agriculture relation. This means that, while under monopoly capitalism the unequal industry-agriculture exchange implied an unprecedented shift of wealth from agriculture to industry, this phenomenon must now cease; in fact, to a certain degree, it is imperative to bring about a transfer of wealth from industry to agriculture to encourage the latter's rapid development. In concrete terms, this means that: (1) industry must not sell its goods above the value of agriculture; (2) agriculture must stop selling below value; and (3) in very many cases, industry, to encourage agricultural development, will have to sell below value and at the cost production level.

This type of policy obviously implies a more moderate accumulation tax for industry but this is the price that will have to be paid for a planned global outlook. For it actually makes no sense to have a situation such as in Italy, where everything has been sacrificed for the development of the auto industry. (Italy can today produce more than a million cars each year, but has a 4000 billion lire deficit in the commercial agricultural balance, which kills Italian economy and feeds a deadly inflationary spiral.) Moreover, agricultural underdevelopment condemns entire sectors of the population to undernourishment and stimulates emigration to the city, creating abnormal urban agglomerates of enormous cost to society as a whole. Therefore, from a global viewpoint, it would not be bad to produce fewer cars and more meat and to increase the income of agricultural workers. In this way, exchange becomes incorporated in planning for the realization of a social goal that is foreign to the history of mercantile societies.

It is also obvious that such a radical modification of mercantile categories requires a modification at the juridico-institutional level as well: the contract is the form of exchange, but in a socialist society, the juridical regime shall have to adjust itself to the new economic content of mercantile categories.

4. Let us now draw political conclusions from the criticisms raised above against Kosta. Actually, Kosta's limitations are not so much of a personal character (he is very studious and demonstrates a social sensitivity absent even from the best East European "reformers," including Brus). Rather, his is a limitation of a political, social character, i.e., its limits are the political limits of the New Course of the left. This component of the Prague Spring was shaped by old communist cadres who, after Stalin's death, attempted to resume the debate on workers' democracy. However, this type of debate was not being supported by a consistent and durable resumption of the class struggles in these countries: the proletariat was and still is paying the price of a depoliticization suffered in the Stalinist and post-Stalinist (or better, neo-Stalinist) periods. In this situation, the meaning of political action lay not in factory struggles and workers' impetus, so much as it did in starting from the existing political institutions—state and party. Thus, each new discourse must prudently start from the inside of institutions where it must search for its own allies. Here lies the weakness of the Prague left which, in a similar situation, is incapable of a frontal attack against the state and the party. At the scientific level, Kosta's book translates this political weakness by the lack of an analysis of social classes, the state and party in Eastern Europe. As shown, this leads him to a "neutral" view of the state and brings him close

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to western reformers (even though he is so different in other respects); also, in so far as Kosta's position is quite different from and far more leftist than Sik's, this view forces him into an unnatural alliance with Sik, whose theses are always positively cited in the volume. Here the alliance with Sik was necessary; they had to join in a common front against the bureaucrats. Because of the absence of a workers' thrust, the only thing remaining for this extremely weak left was to ally itself with Sik's technocrats (perhaps also in the hope of having some effect on them). The same weakness on the part of the left explains Kosta's positions on self-management as well as his undeveloped discussion of the modification of mercantile categories and his opinion on Yugoslavia. If there is no real thrust from masses guided by the working class, it is impossible to imagine truly alternative models. In this way, Yugoslav self-management seems like a step forward, self-management in Prague becomes idealized and the discussion on the surpassing of mercantile categories fails to move ahead.

As Lucien Goldmann has shown, in each epoch there is a possible consciousness that is historically limited, and it seems certain that one of the fundamental limits to this consciousness is the potential of political relations. People think what they have the potential for thinking; they conceive of real possibilities in a certain, historically determined horizon. By emphasizing the dangers of market socialism and stressing the need to overcome mercantile elements, while at the same time urging the need for a workers' democracy not limited to the factory but embracing society as a whole, Kosta reaches the extreme limits of his potential consciousness and stops short, entangled in an ambiguous embrace of Sik's technocrats. Kosta could have overcome his limitations only through the resumption of the social dialectic, because the horizon of his potential consciousness would have grown wider. Unfortunately, however, the Novotny crisis was not due to the attack of the workers but to the jamming of the economic-political mechanism. Until May 1968, the workers remained in the background; then, when they came forward there was some activity at the factory level, but of short duration (about two months). After that, in August, came the Russian tanks and "normalization." Two months cannot cancel out 20 years of political expropriation of the working class, and therein lies the great weakness of the Prague experiment and of the New Course left of which Kosta is a part.

Antonio Carlo

Santiago Carrillo, *Eurocomunismo y Estado*. Barcelona: Critica (Grijalbo), 1977. 218 pages.
Fernando Claudin, *Eurocomunismo y Socialismo*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1977. 181 pages.

Eurocommunism is a phenomenon which goes beyond the theoretical and political debate, to enter into the field of international relations. Recently this aspect has had two protagonists—Brezhnev and Carrillo, the USSR and the Secretary General of the Spanish Communist Party. Under these conditions, it will be useful to clarify and review Carrillo's opinions as well as those of Claudin, the well-known author of *The Crisis of the Communist Movement* who belonged to the Spanish Communist Party until the early sixties when he was expelled by Carrillo for holding positions very close to the present Spanish communist strategy. In addition to illustrating the kind of orthodox past from which eurocommunism has emerged (only in 1968, after Carrillo's condemnation of the Czechoslovakia invasion, eurocommunist ideas began to shape

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the Spanish Communist Party), this makes Claudin an outstanding interlocutor of Carrillo. Thus, the two books are complementary. Claudin's essay points towards problems for which *Eurocomunismo y Estado* is definitely a primary source. At the same time, Carrillo's book with its "official" tone, finds in *Eurocomunismo y Socialismo* an adequate counterweight.

Carrillo's book is not a theoretical contribution. It is a defense of a political program by a political leader aimed at a mass of militants with different sensibilities and within a rigid tradition where sharp shifts are not always possible. This cautious standpoint marks the whole book. There is a constant search for a balance between the old faith and the new propositions at the price of repeating the same arguments many times. The unavoidable results are ambiguity and lack of consistency, within a text written in a very abrupt style.

The clearest example of this contradiction is in the way Carrillo keeps the Leninist heritage in order to preserve the still magic label of "Marxism-Leninism." The Secretary General of the Spanish Communist Party just suggests what practically all the critical Left admits, that Leninism represents the kind of authoritarian and technocratic Marxism still practiced in the USSR. Thus, his critiques of Leninism never reach a very deep level. Carrillo simply condemns Lenin's scorn for democracy by stringing along a collection of quotations by Marx and Engels in favor of democracy. In other words, he employs the classical scholastic method that he himself had elsewhere condemned.

Carrillo reviews the historical evolution of his party in order to locate precedents for his present eurocommunist positions. In this respect, he emphasizes the Communist Party's support of the Republican legality during the Spanish civil war. Also, in a first attempt to a self-critique, Carrillo recalls a dark episode (the assassination of Andreu Nin—a prominent Trotskyist leader of the Catalan Workers' Party of Marxist Unification—P.O.U.M.), which took place during the civil war and is commonly attributed to the Spanish Communist Party. Carrillo admits that perhaps some rank-and-file party members were responsible, but he adds that they acted as individuals and not as party members. At any rate, whether they were responsible or not, the war circumstances were very confused. This is a perfect example of an "official explanation" which does not offer a full picture of the events in question. This kind of "official bias" is especially evident in the book's historical section. As already mentioned it is only a preliminary step towards a self-critique. Carrillo's review is far from a true, critical self-reflection. It must have been included for tactical reasons in the impossible effort of redefining the past in the light of the present. Perhaps in the future, after the achievement of the unity of the Left that Carrillo himself proposes (a version of the French common program between communists and socialists) the historical perspective will be free of tactical biases.

The union between communists and socialists is praised, and this is one of the positive features of the book. Other positive ideas are: the conception of socialism as a progressive deepening of democracy; the defense of political life as a plural effort of "new political formations" (like the Communist Party itself), without falling into the temptation of forced unification; the rejection of authoritarianism (the Soviet one included); antidogmatism.

With respect to the analysis of the State in monopoly capitalist societies, Carrillo argues that it is possible to win over for democracy and socialism people working in different ideological apparatuses—State bureaucracy, the Army, churches, schools, etc. Some of these apparatuses, particularly the Army and the Catholic Church, are

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examined in terms of their present Spanish context. Carrillo feels optimistic and encouraged by recent transformations of Spanish society and claims that those traditionally closed sectors will be change-oriented in the future. He is particularly happy with the change of political attitudes within the Church during the last years of Franco's dictatorship and the progressive professionalization of the Army. These apparatuses and their components, i.e., civil servants, technicians, officers, priests, teachers and professors, etc., must play a very important role in the social struggles in an advanced capitalism characterized by transformations of the class structure and the forces of production: the increasing active intervention of the State and the increasing importance of forces such as science and technology. At the level of the Party's leadership, Western communism recognizes the new sociological patterns introduced by the development of industrial societies and, most importantly, the consequences that this has for a leftist political strategy. Despite the insistence on these transformations by various social scientists such as Touraine, Bell, Habermas, Richta, etc., Western Communist Parties were caught by the crises of the late sixties in a state of plain "theoretical indigence" (this accurate expression is Claudin's). This long-overdue recognition must be welcome.

A problem arises, however, in Carrillo's book. He constantly talks about changing the orientation or functions of ideological apparatuses, but he never refers to the possibility of changing, or even transcending, the apparatuses themselves. In other words, Carrillo neglects the possibility of qualitative changes because of an overly structural vision. Sometimes this neglect is irritating. One need only point to Carrillo's incredible characterization of May 1968 as the revolt of recently proletarianized sectors that have suddenly discovered their new condition. It is simply grotesque to ignore the critical-Utopian shift introduced by May 1968 and in general by the qualitative revolts of the 60s. Carrillo is too cautious. Thus, he balances any innovative proposition with a set of old stereotypes. The book, however, contributes to clarifying eurocommunism.

In contrast to Carrillo, Claudin writes from a totally independent position with no party responsibilities. This provides a considerable advantage. For instance, he can criticize the USSR beginning with the Leninist roots, without having to disguise it through historical accidents. A full conception of the construction of socialism—vanguards, single party, etc.—can be criticized without ambiguity. Consider the following: "The only real, concrete and material experience of council democracy which consolidates itself as a form of State and as a social organization—the soviet system...—rapidly reveals deep contradictions with respect to the theory of council democracy... [These contradictions] are not deviations from a conceptual model...but *contradictions which dismiss the very core of the model.* Workers' democracy is blocked by a system of apparatuses which escape popular control and become power structures dependent upon the central apparatus that organizes and directs them—the apparatus of single party" (p. 93; emphasis added).

Claudin not only criticizes Leninism, but also attempts to construct socialism without democracy; e.g., classical social democracy which both in its German and Austrian versions was limited to consolidating a poor form of democracy—bourgeois democracy in its purest sense. For Claudin, democracy, i.e., democracy towards socialism, must be socially mediated by a new organizational model for which he advances the name of "sociopolitical block." This "block" would reconcile traditional, representative democracy, with new democratic demands of grass-root organizations and community movements. Also, it would go beyond the "single party" or "single

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union" syndrome which inevitably degenerates into dictatorship. Furthermore, the "block" would question not only the agents of the democratic mechanisms, but also the mechanisms themselves—their conditions, their practice, even their existence if the case arose. Claudin suggests a new scheme for the construction of socialism which tries to avoid both the dangers of capitalist democracy and of Soviet authoritarianism—two models that he knows very well, since he has lived in exile in the USSR and in France (at present he lives in Spain). Comparing Claudin's "sociopolitical block" to Carrillo's "new political formation," I find Claudin's formulation much more useful. While Claudin proposes a qualitative social renewal, Carrillo remains quite traditional in his vision of political pluralism and, moreover, he retains the old notion of "vanguard party" in relation to the role of the Communist Party in a future period of political and social maturity.

Claudin considers present eurocommunism as a hopeful but incomplete step towards the participant, dynamic and plural conception of democracy for socialism that he himself defends. Eurocommunism, whose historical genesis is accurately traced in an introductory chapter, would require: 1) true democratic practice within its own ranks;[1] and 2) a tougher attitude towards the USSR (this was written prior to the Brezhnev-Carrillo polemics and refers to all the eurocommunist Communist Parties).

Claudin's critique of eurocommunism is most valuable in his account of the difficulties of the eurocommunist strategy in bringing about a stage of advanced democracy preceding the stage of transition towards socialism—a stage of "transition to transition." This conception of a period prior to the construction of socialism is practically the core of the eurocommunist theses. Claudin examines the problems that it generates not from a theoretical perspective, but focusing on the Italian case which indeed is paradigmatic of the eurocommunist alternative. He wonders whether or not Berlinguer is right when he proposes the creation of an antimonopolistic block, assuming that all of the Italian bourgeoisie is actually anti-monopolistic, i.e., that the nationalist feeling (the feeling of the "historical compromise") will be stronger, among the national bourgeoisies, than the temptation of collaborating with multinational capital. Claudin seriously doubts this in the best chapter of the book. The future will tell the degree of simplicity that eurocommunist Communist Parties may show in their interpretations of interests and conflicts molding their societies.

Claudin, who has a first-class knowledge of the topics that he analyzes in *Eurocomunismo y Socialismo*, presents eurocommunism as a late and partial reception at the institutional level, i.e., at the level of Communist Parties, of some trends in Marxist and critical thought that were formulated before the "eurocommunist boom;" and he does so in a clear, non-academic style. Claudin's excellent essay welcomes the process of renewal in Western institutional communism, wondering about its ultimate scope. At the crossroad of such a developing process, Claudin indirectly polemizes with Carrillo. Aware of the symbolic value that this polemics holds, it will be fascinating to see its future historical fruits.

José E. Rodriguez-Ibanez

1. Not only Claudin, but also communist militants are sensible to this lack of internal democracy. In this respect, Sergio Vilar's article "Suenos y tortillas eurocomunistas" (*El Pais*, Madrid, Aug. 7, 1977) is to the point. Vilar, a journalist and political scientist, author of a book on Francoism and a militant of the PSUC (the Catalan Communist Party) denounces the authoritarian attitudes of the Spanish Communist Party's leadership within the party.

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Douglas Kellner, ed., *Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.

Continuing the New Left's revival of Karl Korsch in the late 1960s, recent Korsch translations, anthologies, and critical studies have appeared everywhere in Europe.[1] Aside from theorists such as Bottomore, Harrington, and Aronowitz who acknowledge a certain indebtedness to Korsch, the bulk of the recent critical reception of Korsch in America has generally reflected Vajda's critique and shared his sentiment—"If today Korsch serves as a theoretical basis for New Left movements, it only proves the truth of our critique."[2]

Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory is presented, however, as an attempt "to provide the necessary prerequisites for a critical Korsch reception in the English-speaking world" (p. 105). Kellner has prepared this anthology with the conviction that familiarity "with the Korschian opus as a whole and the historical circumstances within which his work was produced" (p. 105) has been generally lacking in America. There is a certain ironic twist here since Korsch has been more sympathetically received in America while undergoing a medium to well-done roasting in Europe, especially by Germans and Italians familiar with the Korschian opus. Unfortunately, the intended implication of this irony becomes painfully clear when Kellner capitulates to the European criticism of Korsch after carefully reconstructing the historical context of Korsch's thought. But despite the theoretical thinness of this capitulation, Kellner has given us an exceptionally fine collection of Korsch essays by developing and expanding the kind of critical-historical analysis of Korsch carried out by Michael Buckmiller in Germany.

Given the times, it is unusual to find an anthology possessing the integrity of a book. *Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory* has such an integrity thanks to Kellner's general introduction and the six other separate introductions—one to each of the six divisions of Korsch's political writings. As Kellner notes: "Korsch's interaction with his historical environment requires a detailed reconstruction of the historical events to which his writings were a response and an expression in order to provide the proper context to understand his work" (p. 4).

Most of Kellner's general introduction is a detailed historical reconstruction, but the sections entitled "Korsch's Revolutionary Historicism" and "The Crisis of Marxism" are especially interpretative and, as such, form the basis of Kellner's conception of Korsch's revolutionary theory. Kellner's reconstruction is accurate and to the point; it should dispel whatever remains of the myth that Korsch was an anti-Bolshevizer in the left-oppositionalist camp during the period 1920-1925. Korsch, Kellner points out, was pushed into the left-opposition by Stalinist smear and purge tactics following his September 6, 1925 attack on the Thälmann-Dengler group's willingness to

1. In America *Marxism and Philosophy* appeared in 1970, followed by *Three Essays on Marxism* in 1971. Earlier in 1964 and 1965 Paul Mattick and Erich Gerlach had contributed sympathetic although somewhat misleading essays on Korsch. In 1972, Hedda Korsch's "Memories of Karl Korsch" appeared, and an English translation of Mihaly Vajda's 1968 critical review of the new edition of *Marxismus und Philosophie* appeared in Dick Howard and Karl Klare's, *The Unknown Dimension*. The tone and philosophical temper of Vajda's review was subsequently preserved in most of the critical evaluations of Korsch in *Telos* 26 (Winter 1975-76). Prior to the *Telos* presentation, *New German Critique* had published the translations "The Crisis of Marxism" (Fall 1974) and "What Is Socialization?" (Fall 1975).

2. *Unknown Dimension* (New York, 1972), p. 143.

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subordinate KPD politics to Soviet interests (p. 51). Problems arise, however, with Kellner's interpretation of Korsch's philosophy of praxis and the limitations he ascribes to that philosophy.

Kellner calls Korsch's dialectical unification of theory and practice[3] "revolutionary historicism;" a position "which roots revolutionary theory in the revolutionary movement and its class struggle" (p. 34). But by refering to Korsch as a historicist, albeit a revolutionary historicist, Kellner completely undermines the thrust of Korsch's critique of Marx's epigones in the second period of Marxism's development, i.e., that they appropriated the materialist conception of history in a completely undialectical manner. More importantly, the term "historicist" applied to Korsch's revolutionary theory implies that that theory lacks a philosophy of history and is opposed to any philosophy of history.

On page 24 of the general introduction Kellner maintains that Korsch's " 'revolutionary historicism' underlies both his support of Leninism and the Soviet Union, and his later critical, oppositionalist position." But it is not until page 74 that Kellner adds the caveat: "Korsch's expulsion from the Communist party and the subsequent splintering of the left opposition into powerless small groups rendered problematical the unity of Korsch's theory with existing practice and put into question Korsch's theoretical position.... For Korsch's theory fails to transcend the political vicissitudes of the moment and fails to create an autonomous theory rooted in a global conception of history, society, and human liberation. Moreover, the anticipatory-normative components of theory are sacrificed when theory is merely derived from existing practice." Despite this admonition, however, Kellner goes on to say that, crucially, "Korsch never surrendered the *Marxian dialectic* of theory and practice" (p. 99; emphasis added).

But if Korsch never surrendered the Marxian dialectic of theory and practice, the limits of his so-called "revolutionary historicism" would then most clearly surface in the period designated "the crisis of Marxism." In other words, if Korsch's theory has the limits which Kellner ascribes to it, then it follows that the crisis of Marxism must have found a resolution according to which Korsch's version of *dialectical* Marxism can be judged inadequate. But clearly this implied resolution is today just as problematic as Korsch's conception of dialectical Marxism.

Since the 1920s in Western Europe and the 1930s in the United States, the Marxian conceptualization of capitalist development and its class struggle has *abstractly* comprehended the development of a Concept. Thus, it has not been a material force of change precisely because the *actions* of both the working class and the capitalists have deviated from the "being" which Marxian theory assigned to the antagonistic subjectivity "labor-capital." This unforeseen departure was not, however, a realization of any kind of philosophy. Rather, it rapidly became a counter-revolutionary attempt to abolish all philosophy as a possible material force of revolutionary change. Korsch's thought moved in the nihilistic framework of this *new* historical movement. In 1923 when he argued that the abolition of philosophy had not yet been accomplished but would necessarily involve "a very long and arduous revolutionary process" unfolding "through the most diverse phases,"[4] Korsch simply advocated an indefinite extension of Marx's *philosophy* of history. Eventually, however, Korsch began to call into

3. See *Marxism and Philosophy* (New York, 1970), especially pp. 88-97.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

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question that philosophy of history when it became clear that the counter-revolutionary abolition of reason (philosophy) meant that he could no longer argue that "the *coincidence of consciousness and reality* characterizes every dialectic, including Marx's dialectical materialism." [5] All of this is hardly a matter that has found a ready resolution!

What Kellner avoids is a critical discussion of the dialectical and admittedly problematic elements of Korsch's revolutionary theory. In *Marxism and Philosophy*, for example, Korsch's periodization (including its 1930 nuances of the second period and its revision of the third period) is put forth as explanation of the progressive distancing of Marxian theory from social practice after 1850. It was just this distancing which eventually led to Lenin's early attempts to defend vulgar materialism against the conceits of idealism and his subsequent attempts to revive the Hegelian dialectic in the context of the spontaneity of the soviets. In the abolition of the dialectical unity of theory and practice, Lenin capitulated to the "realities" of bureaucratization and, after 1918, advanced the argument that Russia must begin to follow the model of capitalist development in order to create the objective conditions of revolution as specified in *Capital*. In 1923 Korsch was attempting to give an explanation of Marxism's development from a philosophical anti-philosophy (the unified theory of social revolution) to a philosophically closed system of propositions concerning the logic of capitalist development—all of which followed the widening gap between theory and practice after 1850. In other words, Korsch's application of the principle of historical materialism to Marxism's development dialectically revealed the points at which Marxian theory had become ideological grist for the new capitalist mills. In this sense, Korsch's conception of the unity of theory and practice does reject the "autonomy" of Marxian theory but it hardly minimizes the anticipatory components of that theory.

It was precisely Korsch's insistence upon dialectically tying theory to newly emerging forms of class struggle that kept his revolutionary theory relatively free of the creeping objectivism of post-1850 Marxism: "Although there is an unresolved tension in the later Korsch between the insufficiently mediated political-revolutionary and theoretical-scientific components of the Marxian theory, it would be a mistake to believe that Korsch fell into the snares of either a totally pragmatized theory that solely judges theory on its political use (Korsch criticized Lenin on these grounds), or that he took a totally positivistic view of theory. In fact, Korsch continued to defend a version of *dialectical* Marxism and never fell into the dogmas of pragmatism or positivism" (p. 96). Agreed, but if Korsch's "revolutionary historicism" underlies his orthodox as well as his later oppositionalist positions, then his *dialectical* Marxism must be historicist.

But it was because Korsch refused to take the "formal" separation of the logical character of Marxian theory from its historical character that enabled him to develop a revolutionary theory that steadfastly held out against the illusion that it sought to dispel without succumbing to cynicism in the midst of that illusion's stubbornness and barbaric manifestations. [6]

The problematic character of Korsch's revolutionary theory is rooted in the fact that in 1923 Korsch did not realize that his interpretation of the unity of theory and practice actually pointed to a rupture in the supposedly "unified" general theory of

5. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

6. Cf. Ceppa's completely unsympathetic and undialectical treatment of Korsch's 1942 attempt to break with the monologic, holy and secular philosophy of history—"Korsch's Marxism," *Telos* 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 112-113.

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social revolution advanced by Marx and Engels. Korsch understood Marxist theory as the expression of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, a movement elevated from the content of its class consciousness to the higher level of its being. In his 1923 essay "The Marxist Dialectic" Korsch argued that "the transformation of the 'natural' class viewpoint of the proletariat into theoretical concepts and propositions, and the powerful synthesis of all these theoretical propositions into the system of 'scientific socialism,' is not to be regarded as a mere passive 'reflex' of the real historical movement of the proletariat. On the contrary, this transformation forms an essential component of the real historical process" (p. 136). This position is entirely in line with that of Marx and Engels in *The Holy Family*: "It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletarian is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action [sic] is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today."[7] Thus, what Korsch took to be a unified theory of social revolution was, as Castoriadis has pointed out,[8] an undialectical insertion of the telos of a materialist philosophy of history into the framework of class struggle in complete independence from the question '*Who* is the proletariat?' For Marx and Engels it was not a question of *who* the proletariat was, but rather *what*. Thus, in Castoriadis's words: "Ultimately, it is the concept of historical materialism that is fundamental to Marx's theoretical work. In this view, the class is only a product of the mode of production (which itself is a product of technical development); it does not really act but is only acted upon."[9] In effect, then, Korsch's attempt to explain the distancing of Marxian theory from social practice after 1850 *vis-à-vis* a theoretical (philosophical) account of the *dialectical* unity of theory and practice placed Korsch at odds with the productivist thrust of historical materialism.

In this context, it is not without significance that prior to 1923 Korsch, in the period of his "practical socialism," was not at all opposed to those political means necessary for the direction of heavy industry (see p. 119). In fact, this adherence to the "necessary" requirements of heavy industry disposed Korsch to Marx's productivist reduction of the proletarian class struggle to a *product* of the capitalist mode of production. And it was precisely this reduction that allowed Marx to couple his philosophy of history to the working class struggle, i.e., at least to the *being* of that struggle. However, this coupling does not constitute a dialectical unity. In effect, what was developed following this coupling was only an abstract logic independent of what the working class as a living whole actually did and said. In this manner, the so-called "political moment" of class struggle was identified with the development of the capitalist mode of production, especially machine production. By 1923 Korsch was, however, insisiting that the dialectical unity of theory and practice required the de-autonomization of the "political" moment of class struggle *vis-à-vis* the *re*-establishment of the "dialectical conception of the relationship of economics to politics." For this recommendation—precisely when Korsch recognized that philosophy could not be dismissed because it had not yet been realized—Ceppa claims that Korsch restricted "total social praxis to the conscious and organized dimensions of the class struggle" and thus interpreted the relation of consciousness to reality "in

7. *Collected Works*, Vol. 4 (New York, 1975), p. 37.
8. "On the History of the Workers' Movement," *Telos* 30 (Winter 1976-1977), pp. 12-16.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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terms of 'coincidence' rather than of identity or non-identity."[10] Kellner's choice of the term 'historicist' reflects this systematic misunderstanding of Korsch's attempt to revive the philosophical side of Marxian theory in connection with the *living* consciousness of the class struggle.

Kellner's failure to critically evaluate Ceppa's critique of Korsch takes another toll later in his introduction to the final division of the book. Here Kellner says: "Korsch's failure to develop a revolutionary Marxism that would serve as an instrument of emancipation *reflects* the failure of the European working class to throw off the yoke of capital" (p. 273; emphasis added). First Kellner accepts Ceppa's verdict that Korsch was hopelessly entangled in reflection theory and then concludes by saying that Korsch's "failure" *reflects* the European working class failure. One wonders what Kellner would have concluded had he included in the anthology Korsch's article "The World Historians." In that, Korsch argues that Marx was a revolutionary bourgeois caught up in the worldview of the philosophers and historians "who imagined that in some way they were dealing with the Universe while all the time they dealt with an exceedingly small sector of that Universe." After he had discussed the critical phase after the abortive bourgeois revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and the subsequent degeneration of universal history into the factory system of specialized research, Korsch went on to argue that Marx's theory "was in fact not so much the opponent as the true inheritor of that classical philosophy which the bourgeoisie had created during the phase of its ascendancy."[11] Most importantly, however, is that after he identified Marx with the tradition of early Christian philosophy of history and its extension by latter-day bourgeois revolutionaries, Korsch stated: "By placing the aims and tactics of the proletarian class struggle on a strictly 'material' basis, Marx tried to extend to the historical and social sciences that intimate connection with technology and industry which in respect to the physical sciences had already been so successfully established by the bourgeoisie itself."[12]

Thus it is strange that Kellner would conclude his general introduction with these words: "Korsch himself never reached a final verdict on the present status and future fate of Marxism, and the movement of history has not yet put us in a position to write the final obituary or elegy to Marxism" (p. 102). If so, then Korsch's 1942 statement is not to be taken seriously: "Yet there is no need to deal further with the potentialities that were inherent in the materialist conception of history in a now forgotten epoch. The whole scheme has not been tested in the manner in which it was conceived *at the decisive historical moment.*"[13]

But despite all of these still unresolved matters in the interpretation of Korsch's revolutionary theory, Kellner's anthology is a valuable and welcome addition to the still growing literature on Korsch. I have chosen to focus on the interpretative side of Kellner's introductions since it is this side that is especially weak in comparison with the well-done job of historical reconstruction. I don't see how Kellner could believe that Korsch is one of the most "relevant political theorists of the century" if Korsch's revolutionary theory has the limits and defects he apparently thinks it has.

James R. Watson

10. Ceppa, p. 97.
11. *Partisan Review*, IX:5 (1942), p. 363.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

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Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1977. 386 plus x pages.

In *Autonomous Technology*, Winner attempts to explain why modern technologies are often perceived to be beyond human control. Although he seeks such an explanation in the technologies themselves, Winner does not develop a critical perspective since he can conceive of no alternative to technical reason. In part, this results from his desire to avoid theoretical speculation, either about the possibility of a "new" science and technology, or about a new moral and ethical context for the old. But, beyond Winner's predilection for concreteness, the piecemeal character of his analysis suggests that *by itself* a theory of technology may not be a very enlightening enterprise: although technology is a distinct phenomenon, its human significance can be made clear only through social theory. Winner's failure to be sufficiently sensitive to the ways in which technologies create a world in which any alternative to technical reason is regarded as absurd accounts for this book's disjointedness: his account of technologies' effects—a survey that concretizes certain aspects of Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society*—is much more insightful than his explanation of the whole process. Winner shows how technology constitutes some of the most basic structures of our world, yet does not articulate a critical method capable of calling into question technological rationality itself.

Winner's main thesis is straightforward: complex administrative and technical systems are not neutral tools. If these systems are to be used at all they must be used in particular ways. Winner argues that the "tool" metaphor is misleading when applied to complex systems, because these systems tend to hide the constraints imposed on human action by their operating requirements—particularly the demands they make on the environment. Winner sees the problem of autonomous technology as a problem of ignorance: people do not realize what they have made until it is too late. Then, if they wish to preserve any aspects of the system, they must preserve its totality—hence the inversion of means and ends that characterizes so much decision-making in technically advanced societies. Because people don't know how the pieces fit together, it seems that we risk the destruction of technical civilization if we do not preserve and foster the growth of each of its parts, even in those cases in which it is clear that a particular part (e.g., Concorde supersonic transports) do not serve human needs.

Winner argues that the idea of "autonomous technology" is itself problematic, and thus in need of explanation. It is the ignorance of the actual structure of complex technical systems that leads to the loss of human control. Thus, we can best understand the constraints generated by complex technical systems by viewing them in the same way that we view natural constraints.

Winner's thesis generates its own research program, which he calls "epistemological Luddism" (325-335). Because the complex interdependence of technical systems makes them so impervious to comprehension and control, one might well ask how society would operate (e.g., how social relations might change) if parts of the technical apparatus were disconnected. Some might try to live outside of as much of the technical system as possible in order to examine the effects of "withdrawal." Perhaps the best experiment of all would be the refusal to repair (for Winner is loath to suggest that the technical apparatus be smashed) technical systems as they break down. Winner's theory, however, does not provide any guidance in this process nor does it address the most problematic issue raised by this proposal: why does his proposal seem so

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implausible? In the face of the overwhelming presence of modern technologies, suggestions for change are often irrelevant to the magnitude of the problem or simply appear absurd (325-328). Winner does offer an insight into the source of this problem, asking "Is not the point of all invention, technique, apparatus, and organization to have something *and have it over with*? One does not want to bother anymore with building, developing, or learning it again... Technology, then, allows us to ignore our own works. It is a *license to forget*" (315). Yet, Winner's thesis contradicts his own insight; for his main point is that people never knew what they had made in the first place. The problem can be put another way: the notion that people have *forgotten* what they have made and with this, have forgotten how life could be other than what it is, implies a kind of false consciousnessness. It seems strange that people simply forget how technologies work (201).

The discussion of Ellul's work, which occupies a central part of *Autonomous Technology*, points to Winner's theoretical impasse. Winner criticizes much of Ellul's work as mystifying and in need of concretization for it to have any practical relevance. But to the extent that Winner does not have a mundane equivalent of Ellul's Christian ideals, he is left without a critical standpoint. In *The Domination of Nature,* Leiss notes that although Christianity provided an impetus to the technical transformation of the environment, it also provided a check on this process with its belief that human dominion over the earth should serve more comprehensive ethical values. The time has passed, however, when these values could have a prescriptive force: they are no longer embedded in the traditional social relations and ways of understanding the human's place in the cosmos that gave them their initial meaning. Leiss's call for the reinterpretation of the idea of the mastery of nature in terms of moral and ethical development is perhaps gratuitous, for he does not articulate the content of such a vision. Yet, to dismiss this as absurd, as Winner does, because contemporary philosophical critique lacks prescriptive force is to eliminate the basis of any critical theory of technology (131-133). Obversely, although Ellul's project is reactionary, it does grasp the importance of non-technical ways of thinking about humane goals (i.e., ways not based on efficiency criteria) in a way that Winner cannot.

A theory of technology must be a social theory, because only as such can it justify humane goals (i.e., a model of the good life). Only by means of a social theory can the conditions of participation of those affected be justifiably related to the actual choices made by a society. The most promising way of integrating technical progress into such a model of participation is a theory of social evolution, i.e., an explication of the conditions under which societies reproduce themselves. Marcuse's and Habermas's attempts along these lines are exemplary. But although Marcuse focuses on the conditions fostering the suppression or liberation of eros, Habermas posits a dualistic mechanism: one set of instrumental relations is employed to explain the material reproduction of society, while another set of communicative relations explains social reproduction. Both schemes locate a multifaceted concept of reason either within the individual (Marcuse's erotic unconscious), or among individuals (Habermas's discursive model of reason) in such a way that the conditions of the determination of goals and values are ideally separate from the social processes of the material reproduction. Conversely, each explains what Winner calls "technics out of control" by the impingement of particular ways of thinking pertinent to the material reproduction of society (e.g., a concept of rationality restricted solely to means) upon individual choices.[1]

1. Obviously Marcuse's and Habermas's approaches differ considerably. Habermas regards

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Because Winner doesn't examine the relation between individual and social structure in this fashion, he cannot conceive of technology other than in those ways that he himself has shown to be constituted by technical reason. As such, there is no place in his analysis for *false* consciousness because there is no *true* consciousness. Winner is right that a number of theoreticians (including Marcuse) construct their prescriptions as though a new social order were already at hand (328). But, although the problem of getting from here to there is too often neglected and information about how technical systems actually function is relevant to this task, this in no way lessens the importance of a vision of what the future should look like, so that the sets of values and attitudes associated with technologies do not determine this future by default.

One could argue that this vision is separable from the structure of explanation. However, the primary obstacle facing a critique of technology is the absence of any compelling standpoint from which to articulate an alternative. Thus, it is important that theory be concerned not only with the content of such an alternative, but also with its foundation. Winner's designation of his research program as "epistemological Luddism" is attractive but misleading. It has little to do with a theory of knowledge because it is unconcerned with the fundamental epistemological question raised by technologies: to what degree and what way must we accept the givenness of this world—including its ways of thinking—in order to understand it?

Winner thinks that by taking apart what has been made already we will learn also how to deal appropriately with them (e.g., determine what needs technologies should or should not serve). This is not unreasonable, but does not guarantee that the proper conclusions will be drawn. It is necessary that the context in which this dismantling occurs be seen more explicitly as one in which people take apart their own ways of *thinking* about technologies as well. In other words, critical hermeneutics (informed by a vision of the good life) of the various representations of the signifiance of technologies should guide the actual dismantling of them. In fact, Winner partly does this in his discussion of the Frankenstein and Prometheus stories (chapter 8). But, as with most of his interesting insights, these studies are not integrated into his account. The perception of technology as autonomous is not only a result of its complexity, but also of the ability of technologies to structure a world in which nontechnical ways of thinking have no relevance to the problem of the good life. For this reason, the goal of the piecemeal dismantling of technologies should not be simply to see how well we can get along without them, but also to create a space in which other ways of thinking can operate.

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man's understanding of nature under contemporary science and technology as a rational project, and sees the extension of this understanding to most aspects of the social world as part of the destruction of philosophy by empiricism. As such, he argues, the rationality of science and technology must, and can, be buffered by the institutional interposition of discursive reason at the point at which science contacts society: in its translation into technology (see his essay "Technical Progress and the Social Life World," *Toward a Rational Society*, [Boston, 1971], pp. 50-61). Marcuse, on the other hand, considers the illicit transfer of the categories of science to society to be a part of the historical derailment of Western reason, in which one-dimensional thought has come to prevail in all areas of human action. Accordingly, he does not see the illicit transfer of categories as taking place between the realm of nature and society but regards this distinction, in so far as it implies separate types of reason for each realm, as itself part of the problem. Yet, despite these significant differences regarding the essential character of reason, both Habermas and Marcuse consider the present era to be characterized by the illicit impingement of formal means-ends rationality on substantive valuation. See, for example, Marcuse's essay "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Work of Max Weber" in *Negations*, (Boston, 1968), pp. 201-226.

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These considerations bear not only upon Winner's thesis but also on one of his more substantive conclusions tucked away in his discussion of Lenin's *State and Revolution:* "One can seek the high levels of productivity that modern technological systems bring. One can also seek the founding of a communal life in which the division of labor, social hierarchy, and political domination are eradicated. But can one in any realistic terms have both? I am convinced that the answer to this is a firm 'no.' The reasons can be found in the theory we have examined as to what constitutes a technology, reasons confirmed by the historical evidence of this century" (275). But, is there any reason to believe that all divisions of labor (for many technologies do require high levels of specialized knowledge), including non-compulsory functional differentiation on the basis of skills and interest, are ineluctably linked to non-rational social hierarchy, the loss of communities, and political domination? How is Winner led to this Manichean conclusion in the face of the manifoldness of modern technologies (e.g., information processing, plant and animal breeding, behavior modification, bicycle design and repair), the diverse areas of their application (e.g., medicine, industry, warfare, waste disposal, education), and the different social arrangements under which they may be employed? Partly, it is due to the legacy of Ellul's style of analysis, which is extraordinarily undifferentiated. More importantly, it may stem from Winner's belief that not only do people not know what they have made, but that they can't know it in any systematic fashion unless they take it apart and start all over again. Dismantling technologies is part of learning about them, but to represent that as the only way too easily leads to the idea that it is only by being rid of modern technologies that we can construct a humane social order.

Fred Alford

Albert William Levi, *Philosophy as Social Expression.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. 318 pages.

The collapse of the New Left has, among other things, precipitated a reappraisal of methodology in the history of ideas. In this context, Levi has written a text that will be of considerable interest to those interested in problems of Marxism. Writing in the tradition of Hegel, Bergson and Dewey, Levi argues for a totalizing methodology in the history of philosophy: the goal of reconstruction is to embrace the *triad* of texts, author's biography, and social context, that governs the emergence of any philosophy. Levi's methodological novelty is to demand that philosophical production be integrated into the social context through the mediation of personal biography. The author's chief point is thus to "emphasize how social necessity and personal identity interact in producing notable philosophic achievement" (37).

Sartre attempted something similar in *Search for a Method:* "[Existentialism] intends, without being unfaithful to Marxist principles, to find mediations which allow the individual concrete—the particular life, the real and dated conflicts, the person—to emerge from the background of the general contradictions of productive forces and relations of productions" (57). The clue to the "individual concrete" is, for Sartre, one's childhood and family which together function "as a mediation between the universal class and the individual." Sartre is on the right track: the problem *is* to demonstrate "man's affirmation through action" and the creation of the project of an

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"oriented life." However, Sartre's emphasis on childhood is exaggerated, and he ultimately obscures the individual agent whom he wished to reveal by methodologically adopting the principle that (somewhere) within our early years is embalmed a "mist of irrationality," a decision that is reflected and dominates "our rational choices as mature men."

In opposition to Sartre, Levi suggests a methodology which, while lacking the universal tragedy of Sartre's vision, nevertheless attempts to grasp the rationality of the "individual concrete:" the philosopher's life and work must be reconstructed around that single, comprehensive and fundamental *question* the philosopher's life-work seeks to answer. Each philosopher is then to be contextualized through a *totalizing* logic that is based on telos and coherence. The immediate difficulty lies in locating this thread of meaning within the cacophony of biographic, social, and textual data which frequently engulfs the disciplined researcher. Levi suggests that, building on a thorough familiarity with the details of the text, life and epoch, we focus our attention on apparent contradictions: those of the era—economic, social and political—and those that may emerge (1) within the philosopher's work, and (2) between his work and his life. Frequently, the needed interpretive starting point appears in the "gap" between the philosopher's words and his actions: Plato banished poets, yet relied heavily on myth, and Descartes advocates a *private*, isolationist philosophic method, while later emerging as a *public* figure in the court of Queen Christina. Finally, a further integrating clue to a philosopher's character and aspirations is often found through careful attention to that which is excluded, forgotten, repressed, or ignored in his corpus. For example, G.E. Moore's value-blindness in asserting that personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments "include *all* the greatest, and by far the greatest goods we can imagine" raises immediate questions as to how such a great mind could be led to overlook so much of what is valuable and important in life—a question that Levi answers by sociologically grounding Moore in the elitist aestheticism, chumminess and isolation of Edwardian Cambridge at the turn of the century amid the collapse of Victorian moral values and self-confidence.

In *Philosophy as Social Expression*, Levi has been able to provide *exemplary* studies on four diverse philosophers: Plato, St. Thomas, Descartes and G.E. Moore. Of the four, the chapter on Descartes is the one that will best repay a short review.

In his presentation of Descartes, Levi focuses on the immediately surrounding sociological frames productive of the philosopher's *lived experience*. To be sure, Levi will later describe Cartesianism as transitional from feudal and Renaissance intuitions and values to emerging industrial and scientific culture. Yet, if the philosopher is to be sensitive to larger epochal trends, it is in virtue of the communication of "totality" through the mediation of *proximate* institutions and social formations. Levi's thesis is that the philosopher is not a detached observer, but rather an emotionally involved participant whose sensitivities and affections, cultivated not so much by the distant but by the near, form the boundaries of his philosophizing. For example, Descartes's rejection of scholasticism is not an abstract intellectual "result" but the mirroring and outcome of his educational experience at the Jesuit school La Flèche. Thus, if we are to read into Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* an aristocratic bias for the static and enduring as well as an equally class-based repugnance for the obscure, there obviously must first be the historically grounded subject. Levi argues that what is needed in the history of ideas is a new "sense of the concrete," appreciative of the fact that philosophers function in a synthetic web of intitutionally transmitted historicity enlivened in the tension of novel discoveries and perceived horizons.

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It is precisely at this point that Levi's sociology of knowledge advances beyond the Marxist recognition of "the indissoluble bond between the history of economic and social facts and the history of ideas." Thus, while Marxist efforts such as Goldmann's are designed to demonstrate the connection between the tortuous route of a developing social group or class fragment and certain emerging ideological configurations, Levi stresses the role of the philosophizing *individual* as the mediation between a society's "economic facts" and its intellectual and cultural products. Goldmann is correct—*comprehension* is preferable to a mere *understanding* of doctrines or historical sequences. However, his attempt to grasp the "total character of human activity" while ignoring or glossing over the participation of the actual creative agent is bound to fail. Undoubtedly the uses and appropriations of a given philosophy are interesting and indicate the internal conflicts and disintegrating tendencies, but it is Levi's thesis that historical reconstruction involves a perception of the *philosopher's* immediate situation: his aims and objectives, sympathies and allegiances, unchallenged presuppositions and intuitions. Goldmann's Marxist sympathies ultimately confine his attention to the broader sociological constellations of class and economic interest.

Comprehending Descartes involves not merely positing him abstractly as a member of the *noblesse de robe*, but grasping the connection which runs between his religious sensitivities and training at La Flèche, his scientific passion for experimentation and mathematics, his retreat into privacy at Amsterdam, his communication with men of science across the continent, and his friendship with Elizabeth of Bohemia and Queen Christina of Sweden. Sociologically, the "true significance" of Descartes lies in his elevation of science to an upper-class phenomenon, to the rank of *noble* concern and *higher* learning: "To the seventeenth century Descartes was profoundly influential—almost the new forces of natural science personified—and his theory of vortices was discussed by learned high-born ladies as his experiments were imitated by dukes and princes. In fact it can almost be said that Descartes singlehandedly is responsible for the ennoblement of science—the inclusion of scientific concern in upper-class experience, unknown in the time of Montaigne—and for bringing physics and physiology to join ancient languages, philosophy, and *belles lettres* into the humanistic pantheon" (225). Despite Lefebvre's claim that the *Discourse on Method* is a manifesto of the ascendent liberal bourgeoisie (a claim that blatantly ignores the explicit conservatism of chapter III) and Sartre's claim that Cartesianism prefigures existential freedom, Levi argues that Descartes's labors, both in terms of design and influence, are *aristocratic*: the solipsistic appeal to the security of subjectivity smacks of leisured birthright and the very criteria of *clear* and *distinct* belong to the mentality of classical seventeenth-century society. While anticipating an age "in which science, with all its details of application and technological elaboration, has become the master of life," Cartesian "rationality" is nevertheless a moment of the spirit of its age, i.e., a quest for order and a "demand for the logical." To the seventeenth century, logic made little appeal to neutrality, but rather overtly bespoke "a class incidence and a special aristocratic meaning." The formalistic character of Cartesianism (its unwavering attention to method, rules and direction) and its emphasis on analysis exhibit a preference for fixed and ranked divisions in culture and society. Although it is not possible to do justice to the detail of Levi's efforts, both his claim (Cartesianism is an aristocratic expression) and his method (contextualization of the philosopher) reveals a humanistic sensitivity that enlivens the history of ideas.

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Clearly, Levi is genuinely sympathetic to the best Marxist practitioners. Yet his work points to a disingenuous side of "radical" investigations into the history of philosophy. From the very beginning, Marxism has bound itself to a unity of proletarian politics (practice) and scientific analysis (theory)—an orientation that has unfortunately treated philosophy with little sympathy. From the side of practice, philosophy has been regarded with suspicion as a reactionary force. On the other hand, from the perspective of science, philosophy has been investigated as ideological superstructure: thus Lukács's insight that "modern critical philosophy springs from the reified structure of consciousness." In either case, philosophy fares poorly, and the dominant research attitude is debunking and negative. This, however, is what Levi challenges.

The goal of *Philosophy as Social Expression* is to present philosophy as a contextualized "quest for value" that can be understood neither as sophisticated pamphleteering nor by means of complex trains of scientific deductions. The great value of this text is that it articulates a new ideal of historical comprehension, a new "sense of the concrete." Taking seriously what has already been announced in the work of Sartre, Lukács and Dewey and building on his previous studies on the relationship of philosophy and culture (*Philosophy, Literature and the Imagination* and *Humanism and Politics*), Levi's book is a call for a new direction in the history of philosophy.

William Hamilton

Urbanism/Urbanization/Urbanology

The Urban Question:
A Marxist Approach
by Manuel Castells

A review of the original French edition of this book in the *American Journal of Sociology* hailed it as "the most finished product yet to emerge from the new (Marxist) school of French urban sociology . . . The aim of the book is nothing less than to reconceptualize the field of urban sociology. It is carried out in two stages: a critique of the literature of urban sociology (and urbanization) and an attempt to lay the Marxist bases for a reconstructed urban sociology."
$19.95

The Ungovernable City
by Douglas Yates
$17.50; $6.95 paperback

Growing Up in Cities:
Studies in the Spatial Environment of Adolescence in Cracow, Melbourne, Mexico City, Salta, and Warszawa
edited by Kevin Lynch
$12.50

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SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS:*

BULLETIN OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS, Oct.-Dec. 1976

Post Office Box W, Charlemont, MA 01339. $2 per issue. DOUGLAS ALLEN, *"Universities and the Vietnam War."* A case study of the successful resistance on the part of some students and faculty members against the Center for Vietnamese Studies at Southern Illinois University. The center was established originally to support America's Vietnamization policy. THOMAS BRESLIN, *"Mystifying the Past."* A critique of establishment historians' complicity in obscuring the circumstances surrounding America's entry into World War II. It is argued that such historians were brought in to dispel a growing suspicion among the foreign policy watchdogs that the U.S. was pushed or tricked into war by its own government for imperialist reasons. Like Watergate, more than a president's personal reputation was at stake. STEPHEN ANDORS, *"The Dynamics of Mass Campaigns in Chinese Industry."* Movements such as the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution and the campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucious did find real support among the masses, insofar as they appealed to the popular disaffection with the rigidification of a hierarchical power structure in factories and political bureaucracies. But the ramifications of such campaigns on the Chinese political processes, on the patterns of communication inside the Communist Party and between the party and the people remain ambiguous, as do other basic issues concerning the nature of mass participation, interest definition and articulation. For Andors, such events generate "mass learning" during which the population is politically educated and new leaders emerge. One wonders about the content of mass learning and its effects on everyday life when campaigns are initiated and terminated at the center but which achieve a dynamism of their own that escapes control. JL

CINEASTE, 7:3

333 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10014. $4 per year (4 issues). RANDALL CONRAD, *"The Minister of the Interior Is on the Telephone—The Early Films of Luis Bunuel."* Bunuel's earliest films reflect the surrealist faith in the subjective experience and its often antagonistic relationship with objective reality. Such a position caused a cleavage with the communists whose Marxist notions of revolutionary art precluded Freudian insights. Bunuel's later films of this period, while more explicitly Marxist in content, retain their commitment to a surrealist aesthetic. LUCY QUACINELLA, *"How Left is Lina?"* Despite the celebration of Lina Wertmüller by North American cineastes, seen from the context of Italian politics, her political consciousness is ambiguous at best and irresponsible and reactionary at worst. FRED KAPLAN, *"Vietnam! Vietnam!—An Exclusive Report on John Ford's Propaganda Documentary for the USIA."* In a last ditch effort to convince the world that America's involvement in Southeast Asia was morally and politically justified, the United States Information Agency commissioned John Ford to execute the project—*Vietnam! Vietnam!* The film backfired—as much a victim of its own logic as of the general decline in the effectiveness of American propaganda. *"Clandestine Filming in South Africa, An Interview with Nana Mohomo." "Cinema in Revolutionary Portugal, An Interview with Fernando Lopes." "What Does a Film Archivist Do Anyway? An Interview with Dr. Wolfgang Klaue."* RUTH McCORMICK, *"The Oberhausen Film Festival, Whither the Short Film?"* This festival, which has devoted itself to the animated, experimental and documentary film, has always had a stormy political past, but seems increasingly to reflect the profound cleavages in the larger radical political scene, especially with new films by and about women. ALBERT AUSTER, *"Sherlock Holmes, Where Are You When We Really Need You?"* A celebration of the renaissance of the detective genre. Short film reviews, book reviews. NW

CINEASTE, 7:4

DANIEL BICKLEY, *"Bernardo Bertolucci's '1900,' A Preview." "Red Flags and American Dollars."* Bertolucci interviewed by Giovanna di Bernardo. By restoring a sense of class struggle in early twentieth century Italy, Bertolucci hopes to fight political amnesia and stimulate a revolutionary optimism in the present. He discusses his own film methods for achieving this—attempting a fusion of both the emotional and intellectual levels. *"The Poetry of Class Struggle,"* Bertolucci interviewed by Fabro de Vico and Roberto Degni. Bertolucci elaborates on the film's dialectical motives and content and its place in popular culture. RANDALL CONRAD, *"A Magnificent and Dangerous Weapon."* An examination of Bunuel's later films,

*This section was compiled by John Fekete, Department of English, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont., Canada. The following have contributed reviews for this issue: David Dickens, John Keane, Mike Lacy, Tim Luke, Janet Lum, Peter Murphy, Greg Renault, Brian Singer, Wodek Szemberg, Susan Wheeler, Nancy Wood.

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especially the relationship he weaves between surrealism and Marxism, the individual and society. MICHIE GLEASON, *"Underground—Pro."* *Underground* is praised for its sympathetic portrayal of the Weather Underground organization. Not only does the film reveal the evolution of Weather theory and practice, it also attempts a self-criticism of its responsibilities to revolutionary struggle. DAN GEORGAKAS, *"Underground—Con."* Georgakas raises certain central considerations which Gleason sidesteps. Though the film's format and lack of critical stance undermines its obvious sincerity, its primary failure can be attributed to the misguided politics articulated by the Weatherpeople. *"Keeping Hope for Radical Change Alive."* An interview with Alain Tanner. *"In this Business You Sure Can't Please Everybody."* Interview with Bernard Goldberg. *"The Left and Porno."* A succinct and enlightened discussion of a crucial topic. RUTH McCORMICK, *"In the Realm of the Senses."* Nagisa Oshima, one of Japan's few filmmakers consistently critical of industrial bourgeois society there, uses *In the Realm of the Senses* to explore the subversive potential of human sexuality. At the same time, the film raises crucial questions on the distinction between pornography and eroticism. More broadly, it may be seen as an elaboration of the Marcusean dialectic between Eros and Thanatos. PETER PAPPAS, *"Culture, History and Cinema, A Review of the Travelling Players."* This film is seen to break new ground in Greek cinema by placing Greek cultural heritage within the framework of a dialectical historical analysis. It also makes a significant contribution to a revolutionary cinematic language and criticism. Short film reviews, book reviews. NW

COMPARATIVE POLITICAL STUDIES, 10:1 (April 1977)

Sage Publications, Inc., 275 South Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90212. PHILIPPE SCHMITTER, *"Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Societal Change in Western Europe."* BIRGITTA NEDELMANN, KURT G. MEIER, *"Theories of Contemporary Corporatism: Static or Dynamic?"* LEO PANITCH, *"The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies."* GERHARD LEHMBRUCH, *"Liberal Corporatism and Party Government."* C.W. ANDERSON, *"Political Design and the Representation of Interests."* The authors of this volume contend that the theory of corporatism offers an attractive explanatory alternative to the pluralist model, suggesting not only a different institutional configuration in the relationship between specialized interest associations and the political process in advanced capitalism, but also a different way of conceptualizing the role and renewed importance of the state during and after World War I. Nedelmann and Meier criticize the static, descriptive aspects of Schmitter's initial formulations, stressing the extent to which corporatist outcomes in Western Europe are less stable and enduring than has been commonly assumed. Panitch's more orthodox Marxist account pursues this theme, emphasizing the asymmetric and contradictory class relations underlying contemporary corporatist formulas. Anderson argues that corporatist practices lack accepted ideological criteria or a public logic that would justify the distributions and regulations consequent upon corporatization. JK

INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, 7:3 (Summer 1977)

Dept. of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. $10 per year. ZILLAH EISENSTEIN, *"Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism."* Distinguishes two approaches to the "woman problem," an orthodox Marxist version that treats the position of women as another consequence of the class structure, and a radical feminist approach that analyzes women as the victims of a male-supremacist power system derived from the exploitation of anatomical differences. Proposes (with much arm-waving and catch-wording) a "dialectical" approach in which patriarchy and capitalism are viewed as mutually reinforcing. NOREENE Z. JANUS, *"Research on Sex-Roles in the Mass Media: Towards a Critical Approach."* Argues that liberal feminist research on the representation of sex roles in the mass media has erroneously departed from the perspective that the chief function of media stereotypes is to sustain male supremacy, therby ignoring the economic context. A materialist approach is suggested with class rather than sex as the fundamental societal division, and with the superstructure (mass media) viewed as a reflection of the base (this latter claim notwithstanding her calls for a recognition of the active role of the mass media). SHIRLEY CERESTO, *"On the Causes of World Hunger and Starvation: Evidence from China, India, and Other Places."* Argues against the Malthusian position, using masses of agricultural, demographic and economic statistics. India and China are contrasted as exemplars of capitalist and socialist agricultural development; food deficits are traced to economic dependency and capitalist agricultural organization, not overpopulation. Despite an occasional propagandistic tone, this is one of the most convincing arguments I have seen on the subject. PEGGY POWELL DOBBINS, *"Toward*

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a Theory of the Women's Liberation Movement and Women's Wage-Labor." Dobbins performs a full-scale resurrection of the Industrial Reserve Army and the laws of capitalist economic development, trying to explain the rise of women's liberation as a movement permitted by the capitalist class because it encourages women's recruitment into labor intensive industries. JOHN C. QUICKER, JANET SCHMIDT, *"A Contribution to the Critique of Bourgeois Criminology: The Case of Criminal Sentencing."* Critique of and counter-argument to an article claiming that there are no inter-class differences in criminal sentencing. JAMES STOLZMAN, *"Teaching Marxism: A Comment on Ollman's Approach."* Criticizes an earlier article by Ollman for his failure to emphasize teaching the history (e.g., Soviet, Chinese) of Marxist political tactics. BERTELL OLLMAN, *"Response to Stolzman."* RICHARD HILL, *"Reflection on 'The Practice of Marxist Social Science' "* and Y.M. BODEMAN, *"Problems of Marxist Social Science: A Response to Szymanski."* Hill and Bodeman point to the proletarianization of university faculty as promoting solidarity with the working class. Plus reviews and letters. ML

JUMP CUT, 5, 6, 7, 8 (Jan.-Sept. 1975)

P.O. Box 865, Berkeley, CA 94701. $4 per year (6 issues). A selection of articles. From No. 5: TEENA WEBB, *"Scenes from a Marriage, Bergman without Options."* Unlike soap operas that diffuse the dilemma of maintaining meaningful human relationships, Bergman is credited with portraying the problem in an honest fashion. Throughout the film, the sexual politics of a marriage unfold, revealing the shaky basis upon which unequal relationships rest. However, the romantic conclusion (the couple as a haven from the outside world), does little to challenge traditional relationships that continue to bind our personal lives. JULIA LESAGE, *"Talkin' to Us."* Jon Jost's film, *Speaking Directly: Some American Notes,* is an exemplary attempt to break through reified modes of discourse in order to present his subjective-objective experience as a radical American filmmaker. MARTY GLISERMAN, *"Death Wish, Watch out, Chicago."* Michael Winner's film *Death Wish* is seen to falsely locate the cause of modern urban fears in criminality rather than in the context that produces it. The solution is as reactionary as the portrayal of the problem—women remain helpless victims, middle-class men emerge as their patriarchal protectors. CONSTANCE PENLEY, *"Semiology's Radical Possibilities."* An appraisal of Christian Metz's *Film Language.* Despite certain theoretical pitfalls, such as Metz's refusal to politicize the aesthetic realm, *Film Language* nonetheless offers a useful tool for employing semiology to explore the relationship between ideology and aesthetic expression.

From No. 6: FRED KAPLAN, *"Riches from Ruins."* Disaster films, the latest genre in American film industry, capitalize on the essential boredom of modern life and deflect its potential into escapism. DAVID ROSEN, *"King Kong: Race, Sex and Rebellion."* Viewed in an historical context, *King Kong* reveals the latent racial and social tensions of postwar America. LINDA GREENE, *"Politics of a Feminist Fantasy."* Nelly Kaplan's film *A Very Curious Girl* presents a rare case of sexual politics in which a woman emerges victorious. While limited in its final resolution, it temporarily vindicates the 'spirit of revenge' experienced by women in patriarchal society. CHUCK KLEINHANS, *"Reading and Thinking about the Avant-Garde."* The avant-garde, while serving as an opposition force to the dominant culture, remains a non-revolutionary movement since it cannot transcend its negative self-definition beyond the confines of individualism.

From No. 7: JOHN HESS, *"Godfather II, A Deal Coppola Couldn't Refuse." Godfather II* makes a profound statement on the contradictory role of the family under capitalism. While the family appears to be the only institution to meet the needs for a human community in bourgeois society, its promise is made untenable by the very laws of capitalist economic life. YING YING WU, *"The Long Road to Liberation."* Alain Tanner's film *Middle of the World* is credited with being one of the few attempts by a male filmmaker to portray the social and political enlightenment necessary to alter our conception of the female experience. A tentative understanding of the relation between class and sexual oppression emerges from the film. JAMES MONACO, *"Picture and Act, Godard's Plexus." Le Gai Savoir,* Godard's very personal and poetic essay on the language of film, seeks to reconstruct the relationship between Method and Sentiment, which Godard deems to be the necessary basis for revolutionary politics. RUTH PERLMUTTER, *"Godard and Eisenstein, Notions of Intellectual Cinema."* Eisenstein's method of juxtaposing images as a metaphor for dialectical politics is compared to Godard's use of radical and arbitrary disjunctions. Despite differences in theory and method, both reveal a concern for film form, the fusion of subjective and objective experience, and the desire to employ film for pedagogical purposes. *Le Gai Savoir* is examined in light of Godard's most recent explorations into the use of work, sound, spatial and role montage.

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From No. 8: MARTY GLISERMAN, *"An Individual in History."* Antonioni's film *The Passenger* is successful only on the level of its critique of the bourgeois individual. As a statement on alienation and lack of identity in bourgeois society, it creates a false rebellion and lands appropriately in a cul-de-sac. MARTIN WALSH, *"The Passenger, Antonioni's Narrative Design."* Working in a semiological context, Walsh argues that Antonioni's film cannot be appreciated at the level of its manifest content alone. In its very form, the film seeks to subvert the dominant cinematic "code" and in so doing, consciously transforms the codes of cinematic discourse. SAUL LANDAU, *"Hearts and Minds, An American Film on Trial."* While reviving the unresolved issues of Vietnam to a forgetful public, *Hearts and Minds* lapses into a liberal plea for national shame rather than a critical appraisal of the central issues. NW

L 76, No. 2 (1976)

Johannes-Dech-Str. 20, 5000 Cologne 60, West Germany. 50 DM per year (4 issues). *L 76* is a new political and literary journal founded and published by Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass and Carola Stern. The journal's ideological orientation is a blend of traditional leftist social-democratic concerns and Eurocommunism. GUENTER GRASS, *"Einige Denkzettel nach der Wahl."* A brief analysis of the 1976 elections in West Germany. ZDENEK MLYNAR, *"Zur Begründung sozialistischer Demokratie."* Mlynar, who in 1968 was thrown out of the Central Committee of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party, documents the similarity of concerns existing between the attempted reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the political programs of Eurocommunist parties. He stresses the tension between centrally administered institutions and democracy which, in his view, could be lessened in the industrialized countries of Western Europe under the aegis of Eurocommunism. HEINZ TIMMERMANN, *"Ptorokoll zum KP-Gipfel."* An analysis of the documents from the 1976 meeting in East Berlin of the leaders of European Communist parties. The author sees a convergence of Eurocommunism and the leftist undercurrents in traditional social democracy. ENRIQUE TIERNO GALVAN, *"Spanien, der Marxismus und die Gesellschaft der Zukunft."* A thoroughly confused essay by the leader of the Spanish Socialist People's Party. Galvan sees the capitalist system as having attained its own limits and poses the necessity of for a 'scientific' elaboration of the radical solution. He criticizes 'futurology' as expressing bourgeois ideology's inability to deal with anything in any fashion other than a quantitative one. The method of historical-dialectical materialism provides, in his view, a theory of the future that can unite normative and empirical aspects of reality. Finally, Galvan ascribes to the Spanish people a messianic role owing to their national need for perfection as well as their ability to mediate between the industrialized countries and the Third World. HELEN VON SSACHNO, *"Auf den Spuren des Prinzips Wahrheit."* An informative sketch of the different strains in modern Russian literature. HANS-JUERGEN SCHMITT, *"Versuche die Repräsentanz zu überwinden."* An interesting account of the ideological pressures exerted by East Germany on its writers. Plus poetry, stories, reports and documents. WS

LIBRE, 1 (1977)

Published by the Petite Bibliothèque Payot. CLAUDE LEFORT, *"Maintenant."* Serves to introduce the first issue of this journal—the successor to the largely unobtainable *Textures*. The article provides through the prism of May '68 a sophisticated critique of the last 16 years of the French intellectual scene. In brief, the author recognizes the validity of the charges brought against classical humanism, but is angered by the tendency to swallow both knowledge and its object in an indivisible, self-sufficient entity, a discourse-object, tautologically adjusted to the conditions of its own production and cut off from the perturbations of experience, the indeterminate "flesh" of the social and of history. But these intellectual trends may be only the echoes of a larger, more profound transformation taking place at the level of ideology—the latter being defined as the neutralization of history, of difference and of interrogation. Ideology no longer speaks from above, displaying the signs of its certitude at a distance from the social, but seeks to bury itself in the latter, making itself invisible, limitless. "In contrast, to apprehend the new representations of ideology, to become sensitive to their connivance with one or other register of the social, is to glimpse a general tendency toward the latter's dissimulation in the present and to gain the possibility of relating ourselves to the social as such, of designating its dimensions of generality, politics and history." CLAUDE CADART, *"Chine 1976-1977.: L'Empereur n'est plus, à bas l'Empereur!"* Begins by characterizing the recent struggles in China as pitting totalitarians against authoritarians. What follows is a dramatic recounting of 25 years of history in which the extraordinary policy reversals of Mao—the villain of the piece—tend to be reduced to simple opportunism, while Teng Hsiao-ping is transformed into the savior on the horizon.

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With recent events, the critical intentions of this article have dissolved. CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS, *"La Source hongroise."* English translation appeared in *Telos* 29. CLAUDE LEFORT, *"Une autre révolution."* Also in *Telos* 29. MAURICE LUCIANI, *"Pour Mémoire."* These three articles are all on the Hungarian events of 1956. The third article is simply a compilation of texts written by communists seeking to justify the intervention. PIERRE CLASTRES, *"Archéologie de la violence: La guerre dans les sociétés primitives."* Noting the universality of war in primitive societies and its near absence in contemporary ethnology, the author seeks a more adequate explanation. The conflict with the Other that war expresses is perceived as the result of the construction of a monolithic identity in a society that allows no internal divisions (between classes and between civil society and the state). GLADYS SWAIN, *"De Kant à Hegel: Deux epoques de la folie."* Intellectual history at its best! For Kant, madness is the otherness of reason, a pure form tending toward its own subjective truth and totally divorced from the community and from the truth of things. Any therapeutic intervention is helpless before such intellectual autarchy. For Hegel, on the other hand, madness must be situated not outside reason, but within it, as its own internal contradiction: it is seen as the presence within consciousness of an element that the subject is incapable of mastering and of ordering in a systematized totality. Aside from the evident similarity of this conception with Freud's notion of a "psychic cleavage," Hegel has bequeathed to us a general signification of madness. Madness is no longer perceived as an arbitrary stain, but as man's "privilege." "What allows me to fix myself in a particular representation that cannot be reconciled with my concrete reality is that I have a completely abstract and indeterminate self, and as such I can admit arbitrary contents and forge totally empty representations." SIMONE DEBOUT, *'Légitime defense—légitime entente: Sade et Fourier."* In this rather dense and meandering piece can be found a series of reflections on the relation between knowledge, authority and desire in the writings of Sade and Fourier. BS

MAYDAY, 1:2

311 West Hastings, No. 10, Vancouver, B.C. Canada. $2 per issue. A non-theoretical magazine published by a cultural politics collective in Vancouver that features many items of interest to local or Canadian readers, with wider radical implications. Articles include a brief presented before the Canadian Radio and Television Commission that argues against an application for a pop radio station; an article on alienated production of art in the Eskimo village of Cape Dorset; an interview with members of Vancouver's "downtown eastside" artistic community; and an extended review of an exhibit of Chinese woodcuts. GR

NEW LEFT REVIEW, 101-102 (Jan.-May 1977)

7 Carlisle St., London W1V 6NL England. $16 per year. TOM NAIRN, *"The Twilight of the British State."* Once again, the United Kingdom is depicted as teetering, like its Hapsburg, Prussian and Tsarist counterparts, on the brink of class revolution. However, because of the moribund character of the revolutionary British labor groups, the final *coup de grâce*, Nairn suggests, will be struck by the neo-nationalist groups of Scotland, Wales and Ulster. WOLF BIERMANN, *"In Conversation with Stuart Hood."* A two-year-old interview made in East Berlin recounting Biermann's formative years. PETER GREEN, *"The Third Round in Poland."* A fairly accurate review of the militant movements that Polish workers have staged against the Gomulka and Gierek regimes. VALENTINO GERRATANA, *"Althusser and Stalinism."* Once again, Althusser is shown to have inadequately provided a "genuinely materialist interpretation of Stalinism." This article is must reading for those interested in Stalin's work as a philosopher. GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ, *"Operation Carlota."* A laudatory account of Cuba's military adventures in Angola. MICHAEL LOEWY, *"Rosa Luxemburg: A New Evaluation."* Review of Norman Gett's new book on Rosa Luxemburg which, of course, reaffirms her inexhaustible inspiration for today's militants. ALBERT SZYMANSKI, *"Is U.S. Imperialism Resurgent?—A Critique of Petras and Rhodes."* A discussion with rejoinder in which the two true giants of contemporary political economy—Szymanski and Petras—engage in fierce combat over the alleged decline of U.S. hegemony—complete with charts and graphs. TL

NEW LEFT REVIEW, 103 (June-July 1977)

GOERAN THERBORN, *"The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy."* A brief but ambitious article tracing the rise of bourgeois democracy in 17 nations of the OECD in order to discover why "a tiny minority class—the bourgeois" can repress the working classes by using democratic forms (which, by the way, Therborn discovers are *not* a sham!). TARIQ ALI, *"The*

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Fall of Congress in India." An extensive analysis of the 1977 general elections in India. VALENTINO GERRATANA, *"Stalin, Lenin and 'Leninism'."* Another ridiculous attempt, via Althusser, to illustrate that Leninism did not necessarily lead to Stalin. Rather, we are told—but not convinced—that Stalin was a pre-Leninist and pre-Stalinist. MICHAEL POSTAN, *"The Feudal Economy."* A review of Witold Kula's *An Economic Theory of Feudalism*. RAYMOND PLANT, *"Hegel and Political Economy—I."* An investigation of the historical lacunae which add up to Hegel's political economy. TL

OUR GENERATION, 11:3 (Summer 1976)

3934 rue St.-Urbain, Montreal, Quebec Canada. $7 for 4 issues. PAUL HOCH, *"Democracy vs. the Ballot."* Voting as a ruling class strategy which relies on the apathetic silent majority. SUSAN WHEELER, *"Libertarian Feminism and Marxism."* "Feminism" (as a coherent political ideology of anti-authoritarianism) is distinguished from the "women's movement" (consisting of various interest groups making demands on the state for equality, redistribution and protection). Includes a critique of (1) the scarcity politics of some elements of the women's movement; (2) Marxist-Feminism, and (3) the wages for housework perspective, not from an instrumental (will it work?) viewpoint, but on a teleological basis. SEYMOURE FABER, *"Working Class Organization."* Faber criticizes the traditional left for presuming workers to be incapable of self-organization and requiring its political assistance. His criticism of the left is not that it is obsolete, corrupt or mistaken, but that it is simply unnecessary. The factory system itself is held to create the possibility of human cooperation and to function as a basis for humane relations among the workers. JAMES W. RINEHART, *"Wage Controls, Unions, and Class Conflict."* Commentary on the reactions of Canadian unions to the imposition of wage and price controls. GARY JEWELL, *"The History of the IWW in Canada."* Reviews. SW

POLITICS AND SOCIETY, 6:3 (1976)

Geron-X Inc., Box 1108, Los Altos, CA 94022. $9.50 for 4 issues. DAVID HARVEY, *"Labor, Capital and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies."* In establishing a theoretical framework for understanding the conflicts relating to the production and use of the totality of physical structures, the author argues that capitalist society must create a physical landscape in its own image. The main focus is on the position and experience of labor (with respect to living as well as working) in the historical development of advanced capitalist countries. FRANCES FOX PIVEN, *"The Social Structure of Political Protest."* The possibility for protest among the lower classes, its form and impact, are shown to be delimited by the social structure that diminishes both its extent and force. JAMES M. GLASS, *"The Schizophrenic and Primitive Thought: The Implicit and Unconscious Nature of Psychological Rebellion."* By taking Lévi-Strauss's view of primitive thought seriously and accepting his conception of what mythic thought means as a structure and message, it is argued that we will be forced to see the expressions of nature in schizophrenia not as an absurd and incomprehensible utterance, but as an implicit and unconscious rebellion against the dominance that an historically determined logic and culture exercise over consciousness. STANLEY ARONOWITZ, *"Culture and Politics."* Focusing on the Marxist theory of art rather than on a general or historical theory of mass culture, Aronowitz outlines some of the main problems in the Marxist theory of culture and some theses regarding directions for future work. PFM

QUEST: A FEMINIST QUARTERLY, 3:4 (Spring 1977)

P.O. Box 8843, Washington, DC 20003. $9 for 4 issues. BEV FISHER, *"Race and Class: Beyond Personal Politics."* The shortcomings and weaknesses of feminist demands are pointed out and attributed as the limitations of political programs that represent only particular interests. The author in fact seeks to substitute one set of particular interests for another: instead of representing "white, middle-class women" the women's movement must represent the interests of the "working-class women" as well as ethnic and racial minorities. To drive home her point that the women's movement does not relate to the needs of working class and minority women, the author includes comments by women from these groups that are hostile to everything feminist. Does this mean that if the working class is not feminist, then the women's movement can't be either? BRENDA EICHELBERGER, *"Voices on Black Feminism."* JUDY WITHEROW, *"Native American Mother."* MORGAN GWENWALD, *"Confrontation Black-White."* MARY McKENNY, *"Class Attitudes and Professionalism."* Professionalism is explored as a category of self-interest and a distortion of class interest. Criticizes middle-class radicals who "dump on" the working class for its reactionary attitudes: racism, sexism, conservatism, materialism and

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consumerism. The author uses economic insecurity and material scarcity and ruling class cultural hegemony not only to explain these attitudes, but to excuse them. Radical critiques are dismissed as "class snobbery." AHSHE, *"Class Vignettes."* MICHELE RUSSELL, *"An Open Letter to the Academy."* The academy as the ideological apologist for conquest in the name of civilization. In a compelling critique that links Black Studies and Women's Studies programs in the university, the author makes a provocative argument for what could be called a scholarship of everyday life, not to be confused with anti-intellectual, ahistorical or untheoretical "relevance." SW

RADICAL AMERICA, 11:3 (May-June 1977)

P.O. Box BN, Cambridge, MA 02104. $8 for 4 issues. BARBARA EHRENREICH, JOHN EHRENREICH, *"The New Left: A Case Study in Professional-Managerial Class Radicalism."* Rejecting the once popular theory that radical students were part of a proletarianized "new working class," the authors hold that most white radicals of the 1960s were in fact professionals and managers in training. Two different political tendencies emerging from the New Left are examined at length—the "radicals in the profession" and the Marxist-Leninists in the "new communist movement." The conclusion is not that radicals of the professional-managerial class have no role to play in a working class movement, but that its elitism is not easily shed. HARVEY BLUME, *"Hands."* A poem. JON WEINER, *"The Communist Party Today and Yesterday: An Interview with Dorothy Healey."* Active in the CP for over 40 years and one of the most influential party leaders in the country, Healey provides a useful and critical analysis of the CPUSA today. PHYLLIS EWEN, *"Beauty Parlor: A Woman's Space."* This photographic essay explores an important institution of women's culture and suggests that beauty culture is not simply a product of a male-dominated, consumer oriented society. Women care for their appearance not only because men demand it, but for themselves and each other. JOE MARTIN, *"Popular Power in Portugal 1976."* This report from Portugal demonstrates that, though the organs of popular power have been weakened since the military coup of November 1975, they remain a more democratic vehicle for the Portuguese Revolution than the Communist Party. Unlike the CP of Spain, which established hegemony on the left and popular support for its leadership, Portugal's Stalinist CP emerged from the fascist period contending with autonomous organs of popular power and with important opposition movements of revolutionary Marxists. PFM

RADICAL PHILOSOPHERS' NEWSJOURNAL, 8 (April 1977)

12 Dartmouth St., Somerville, MA 02145. $4 for 3 issues. DAVID SCHWEICKART, *"Worker Controlled Socialism: A Blueprint and a Defense."* An alternative model to the existing capitalist structure, defending a democratic, worker-controlled, market socialism. Essentially, each productive enterprise would be controlled democratically by its workers who would be in charge of organization of the workplace, factory discipline, techniques and quantities of production. The state would have three basic functions: overseeing the productive assets, controlling new investments, and providing free services usually associated with governments (police and fire protection, health, welfare, etc.). MIRIAM GREENSPAN, *"Feminism and Psychotherapy."* In addressing the question of why women turn in such great numbers to psychotherapy, this radical feminist proposal distinguishes between the traditional model of female health as the oppressed and mystified woman and the liberal feminist model which sees the female as the exceptional, bourgeois, male-identified woman. Both are supplanted by the radical feminist model of the struggling revolutionary woman. IRIS MARION YOUNG, *"Popular Culture Media: Some Aspects of their Social Context and Sensuous Form."* Certain conditions that offer potential for the development of cultural forms pertinent to socialist society are articulated. The claim that popular culture reduces its audience to a passive mass is examined. PFM

REVIEW, 1:1 (Summer 1977)

Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems and Civilizations, SUNY at Binghamton, Binghamton, NY 13901. $10 per year (4 issues). IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN, *"The Tasks of Historical Social Science: An Editorial."* A brief review of several historical movements against the fragmentary specialization of modern social sciences, which the *Review* also hopes to overcome in its published material. KARL POLANYI, *"The Economistic Fallacy."* A critical survey of how the inaccurate logic of economic rationality established itself in the heart of the contemporary social sciences, much to their collective detriment. EMMANUEL LEROY LADURIE, *"Occitania in Historical Perspective."* HURI ISLAMOGLU, ÇAĞLAR KEYDER, *"Agenda for Ottoman History."* ANOUAR ABDEL-

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MALEK, *"East Wind."* TERRENCE K. HOPKINS, *"Notes on Class Analysis and the World System."* A brief note on the structure and organization of classes within a world capitalist system. FOLKER FROEBEL, JUERGEN HEINRICHS, OTTO KREYE, *"The Tendency Toward a New International Division of Labor."* An attempt to organize the current debate on sub-imperialist systems as a new aspect of utilizing a global labor force in manufacturing for world markets. ANDRE GUNDER FRANK, *"Long Live Transideological Enterprise! The Socialist Economies in the Capitalist International Division of Labor."* An interesting discussion in a structuralist vein of how and why socialist economies are absorbed into the more dominant framework of western capitalist economies; and how socialist economies must act as nations in a fashion comparable to multinational corporate enterprises in the non-socialist world. TL

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, 35 (Sept.-Oct. 1977)

396 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. $10 per year (6 issues). DANIEL BEN-HORIN, *"Television without Tears: An Outline of a Socialist Approach to Television."* An attempt to evolve a socialist strategy for television production that might reclaim that medium from its current position as a major cause of the falling rate of intelligence. JULIANNE BURTON, *"Politics and the Documentary in People's Chile."* As the subtitle records, an interview with Patricio Guzman on his film, *The Battle of Chile.* DAVID PLOTKE, *"A Conference Report: Socialism in the Present-day World."* Report on a September 1976 conference in Cautat, Yugoslavia, dealing with national socialist traditions, anti-imperialism, and forms of democracy in socialism. Despite the diversity of the participants, we are told, a "growing directness and informality" characterized the sessions' search for new possibilities for socialists. ELE ALENIUS, *"A Democratic Road toward Socialist Transformation in Finland."* An extremely vague consideration of how the "general problems" facing socialist forces in Western Europe appear in the acute consciousness of Finnish socialists. JEAN-PIERRE CHEVENEMENT, *"Socialism's Chances in Southern Europe."* A strange statement that recommends that Southern Europe, as the "weak link" in the imperialist chain now deeply beset by crisis, should *not* rock the boat of East-West equilibrium. Instead, Southern European socialists should maintain close relations with everyone, while working for European independence. MONTY JOHNSTONE, *"Socialism and the Democratic Exercise of Political Power."* MPLA DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ORIENTATION, *"Anti-Imperialism and Socialism."* FRANK ACKERMAN, *"The Melting Snowball: Limits of the 'New Populism' in Practice."* A perceptive examination of the inherent conservatism of Alinskyite, "new populist" community organizations advocated by Harry Boyte in *SR* 32. The solution to this deadlocked activity, however, is not that perceptive—namely, an "openly socialist" reform movement tied to labor groups. HARRY BOYTE, *"After the Snow Melts, the Spring Begins."* Response to Ackerman. TL

SUB STANCE, 15 (1976)

748 Van Hise Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706. $3 per issue. Special issue on socio-criticism focuses on the relation of literature and society, examined in the light of issues raised by Marxist and structuralist methods. CLAUDE DUCHET, FRANCOISE GAILLARD, *"Introduction: Socio-Criticism."* Programmatic sketch of critical principles for a sociology of the text that draws upon both structuralist and formalist elements in an attempt to escape previous sociologically reductive approaches. Literature is seen as an expression of social experience through writing: "estheticization, the putting into textual form, is also a process of socialization." PIERRE MACHEREY, *"The Problem of Reflection."* The reductive notion of art as a super-structural reflection of the material base actually effaces all history from art, portraying it as mechanically produced from without, giving it an immaterial status. Rather than derivative, art's own integrity as objective material praxis negates the realist conception. Art is passively reflective only to the extent that it is also actively recreated in an interpretative context; art must be studied both as ideological form and aesthetic process. HENRI MITTERAND, *"Colonial Discourse in the 'Journey to the End of the Night'."* Structuralist analysis. FREDRIC JAMESON, *"The Ideology of Form: Partial Systems in 'La Vieille Fille'."* The novels of Balzac reveal a treatment of the ideological problematic: literary 'codes' express the relationship of consciousness to its social ground. The novel in question contains three codes of increasing depth: (1) the code of manners, related to class antagonism; (2) the code of sexual activity; and (3) the all-embracing code of money. Each code demystifies and subsumes the previous one. Further, representative characters combine with the codes to produce a political allegory, an event that calls into question the utility of semiotic analyses of literary character as such. JEAN DECOTTIGNIES, *"Propos Théoriques."* Ideology is seen as the meaning within a text, not the

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conditions of its production. Rather, the determinants of writing and novelistic practice themselves question the very ideology they convey. Interesting application of Foucault. DANIELE SALLENAVE, *"Formalism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis."* A multi-disciplinary accumulation of formalist, Marxist and psychoanalytic methods is contrasted with a proposed historical and dialectical logic of the process of symbolization. This blend of historical materialism with the analysis of formations of the unconscious explodes formalism as such, integrating it into the new method. FRANCOISE GAILLARD, *"Literary Codes and Ideology: Towards a Contestation of Semiology."* The tendency toward formal homogeneity in semiotic "science" eliminates cognition of the subject's dialectical interrelation with the object. Saussurean hypostasis of language formalizes practice and history, thus reducing symbolic ambivalence to scientific ideology. Decoding of texts eliminates negativity by reducing its meaning to identity fetishized as code. Barthes' *S-Z* is shown to display this tendency. P. KUENTZ, *"A Reading of Ideology or an Ideology of Reading?"* Althusserian analysis of ideological ambiguity places "reading" in the dialectic of literary ideology. JACQUES LEENHARDT, *"Towards a Sociological Aesthetic: An Attempt at Constructing the Aesthetic of Lucien Goldmann."* Uninspired expository summary of Goldmann's thought from *Hidden God* to *Cultural Creation.* JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD, *"The Tooth, the Palm."* Eleven provocative theses advance a critique of representation in theater: semiotic relations in the work transmit political relations reproducing the passive subject. Lyotard advocates a non-hierarchical "energetic theater" instead, which attempts to overcome the identitarian moment in representation by utilizing discontinuity. JEAN BAUDRILLARD, *"Toward a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign."* Ideology critique addresses the content but mystifies form; Baudrillard claims to penetrate the formal process of signification at the heart of the commodity form through a semiotic critique of capitalist signification. JEAN-JACQUES THOMAS, *"Entretien avec Henri Meschonnic."* JAMES CORTESE, *"Bourgeois Myth and Anti-Myth: The Western Hero of the Fifties."* Ideology-critique: fictionalization of US history is at the same time creation of a mythology, the projection of middle-class ideals of the 1950s into an imaginary golden age. The development of the western reveals an increase in aesthetic standards and technical complexity paralleled by a self-conscious critique of US life, the creation of an anti-myth which equally mystifies contemporary social reality. JOEL ROACHE, *"What Had Made Him and What He Meant: The Politics of Wholeness in How Bigger Was Born."* Analysis of Richard Wright's views on the creation of his novel *Native Son* in a specific socio-historical context. PHYLLIS ZUKERMAN, *"Ideology and the Patriarchal Family: Nerval and Flora Tristan."* ILEANA RODRIGUEZ, MARC ZIMMERMAN, *"First Aesthetic Meditations on Capital."* GR

THEORY AND SOCIETY, 4:2 (Summer 1977)

Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., Box 330, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. $15 per year (4 issues). FREDERICK LYNCH, *"Social Theory and the Progressive Era."* Combines a simplistic sociology of knowledge thesis with a vulgar exchange theory to account for the divergence in historical interpretations of the Progressive Era. Rightfully criticizes (1) the blind faith in a noble proletariat held by much of the American Left, and (2) economic determinism (the "business-as-Beelzebub" view), but lapses into an equally erroneous political determinism: "Political domination is the ultimate reality." Then, out of the blue, a renaissance of utopian thinking is called for "to move beyond the current choice of a conservative mood or a socialist solution." JAMES SCOTT, *"Protest and Profanation."* Claims that within every 'great' tradition there is a 'little' tradition that constitutes a shadow society. Emphasizes the religious profanations of the little traditions (popular religions) as the embodiment of emancipatory interests of the oppressed peasant classes. DEREK PHILLIPS, *"The Equality Debate: What Does Justice Require?"* A sterile examination of John Rawls's theory of justice and Robert Nozick's entitlement theory. CHARLES AXELROD, *"Freud and Science."* With this essay, the "psychoanalytic epiphenomenon" goes full circle to encapsulate itself and its founder. Suggests that the Freudian notion of 'good' and 'bad' patients (in free association) metaphorically expresses the inimical relationship that existed between Freud and the members of the established scientific community of his time. Then claims that "if the sciences had been authentic, there would have been no need for psychoanalysis." The psychoanalytic program is interpreted as designed by Freud to meet the crisis of western science. The increasingly popular practice of invoking the emancipatory-hermeneutic framework is then employed, though the author is clearly unaware of Gadamer's critique in his *Kleine Schriften* of Habermas for extending the psychoanalytic-hermeneutic model *tout court* to social theory. DD

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